



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**From Excellence to Legacy:  
CUES Names 2025 Award Honorees and Hall of Fame Inductee**

MADISON, WI – November 25, 2025 – CUES is proud to announce this year’s distinguished award recipients, celebrating visionary leaders and one exceptional credit union redefining excellence and inspiring the movement’s next generation of trailblazers. Congratulations to:

**CUES Outstanding Chief Executive—Joseph Hearn, CCE, President/CEO, Dupaco  
Community Credit Union, Dubuque, IA**

This award recognizes outstanding leaders at the CEO level who display professional achievement, support employee motivation, and are dedicated to their community. Under Hearn’s visionary leadership, Dupaco has more than doubled its membership, become a designated U.S. Treasury Certified Development Financial Institution, and launched ‘Invest in You,’ an internal initiative that resulted in an average of 33 hours of dedicated training for each Dupaco employee.

**CUES Distinguished Director Award—Dr. Rick Will, Board Chair, USF Credit Union,  
Tampa FL**

The CUES Distinguished Director Award honors a board or committee member whose achievements have strengthened their credit union. Dr. Will exemplifies the ideal of an engaged, forward-thinking, values-driven leader deeply committed to the mission of people helping people. As chairperson, Dr. Will has strengthened the USF Credit Union board through active participation, thoughtful governance, and by encouraging strategic dialogue

among his peers. Beyond USF Credit Union, Dr. Will champions the cooperative difference to elevate industry dialogue.

**John Pembroke Catalyst for Change Award—Peak Credit Union, Olympia, WA**

The John Pembroke Catalyst for Change Award celebrates advancements in the diversity, equity, and inclusion space. Since a major merger in 2023, Peak has embedded belonging into its core, launching initiatives like ERGs, pay equity, and community outreach. Led by a dedicated DEI & Development team, the credit union has fostered a culture where everyone feels valued, making DEI a foundational part of their operations and services. Their strategic and authentic efforts serve as a powerful model for the credit union industry, showcasing how an inclusive environment can drive meaningful, transformational change in communities.

**CUES Hall of Fame Inductee—Charles E. (Chuck) Fagan III, President and CEO, Velera, St. Petersburg, FL**

CUES Hall of Fame inductee Chuck Fagan is recognized for his transformative leadership, dedication to developing industry talent and innovation, and influential advocacy as a community leader. As president and CEO of Velera, Fagan has guided strategic direction to deliver exceptional results for owner credit unions. During his tenure as CUES CEO, he advanced leadership development and collaboration across the industry, leaving a lasting legacy that continues to strengthen credit union executives today.

"CUES is honored to recognize the outstanding efforts of those dedicated to driving positive change in our industry," said Brian Cacic, CUES VP/Member Experience. "Join us in celebrating the innovative trailblazers who are raising the bar for the entire movement."

The CUES Distinguished Director Award will be presented at [CUES Directors Conference](#), December 7-10, 2025, San Diego, CA. The CUES Outstanding Chief Executive and CUES Hall of Fame induction will be celebrated at [CUES Symposium](#), February 1-5, 2026, Wailea, Hawaii. Peak Credit Union will be honored at a private celebration.

Visit [cues.org/awards-recognition](https://cues.org/awards-recognition) to learn more CUES Awards, and discover more about CUES at [cues.org](https://cues.org).

### **About CUES**

For over 60 years, CUES has advanced the credit union movement by developing exceptional purpose-driven leaders who meet the unique needs of their organizations and the communities they serve. CUES partners with credit unions to elevate the leaders of today and tomorrow through exclusive networking and event opportunities, programs that facilitate personal and professional development, and unmatched digital and in-person learning experiences. Visit [CUES.org](https://CUES.org) to learn how CUES plays a pivotal role in shaping the future of credit unions.

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