



Media Contact:
Carolyn Leftwich
VP Marketing & Business Development
Providence Federal Credit Union
Phone: (503) 522-9651
Fax: (503) 513-8770

6400 SE Lake Road, Suite 125, Milwaukie, OR 97222
providencecu.org

Press Release

Providence Federal Credit Union Longest-time Members of Nearly 50 Years Help Celebrate 50th Anniversary with Credit Union

Milwaukie, OR, July 12, 2013: Providence Federal Credit Union held its 50th Annual Meeting on April 19, 2013. The one hour meeting was filled with food, speakers, gifts, door prizes and awards. But everybody will agree that the highlight of the meeting was our six special guests who joined the Credit Union since we first opened our doors 50 years ago.

“It was absolutely heart-warming”, said Shirley Cate, President/CEO. “These long-time members have been with us for nearly 50 years borrowing and saving from us since the beginning. We wanted to recognize, honor and show our deep appreciation because we wouldn’t be as strong as we are now without their loyal support”.

Of the 10 members who had been with us for 45 years or more, Howard Harris was our longest-time member who joined in 1963. “I heard about the Credit Union when I was approached by an employee”, exclaimed Harris, who retired in 1994 as a Food Service Director at Providence St. Vincent Medical Center. “The employee that approached me explained that they needed a certain number of employees to get it started. So, I agreed to participate. I felt it would be a starting point for St. Vincent”. Harris goes on to state that during his 50 years with Providence Federal Credit Union, he borrowed and saved, and appreciated the fact that we were there if he needed any major financial help.

In June of 1951, Harris began his career as a dishwasher at the age of 18 at St. Vincent Hospital and progressively moved up into management. “Now that I’m retired I spend time with my 18 grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. I enjoy my garden, traveling and trains. I love trains and my first project after retiring was to finish a train for my backyard which was big enough for my wife and I (of course we were smaller 20 years ago), which I had started 30 years ago. I also enjoy visiting the elderly which are shut in.

Life has been good to me and I have been blessed beyond measures. And, it’s just nice to know that my Credit Union was available if I needed any financial assistant”. Harris will be celebrating his 80 birthday in July.

Gloria Hall was a nursing assistant at Providence St. Vincent before she retired as an accountant. She was also approached by a gentleman named Jimmy Gardner who told her they needed at least 100 people to join in order for them to form a credit union. So, in 1968 she joined the credit union and embraced the philosophy of the mission and belief in “People helping people” by being on the Credit Union board for years.

[MORE](#)

Along with Hall, Sharon Vachal also became a pioneer and strong supporter of the Credit Union. She was on the board for 30 years when Vern Talbert was the President/CEO of St. Vincent Credit Union. It made sense for Vachal to join the Credit Union because she was a member of Church Credit Union when she was just a 5th grader, and knew all too well about the benefits of being a member. In 1968, she was hired at the old St. Vincent on Westover working in surgery. “It was natural to join and have money deducted from my paycheck, and with every raise I would add a little more”, stated Vachal. As she grew in her career so did her relationship with the Credit Union. She took advantage of all the savings programs and borrowed as needed, and she “recruited” her husband, mom, sister, niece and nephew.

When Vachal was on the board and held the position as Chair, she faced a big challenge – trying to successfully merge St. Vincent’s with Providence. “We were always very competitive in all departments before we started regionalizing. It took three to four attempts before the members voted for it.” At that time St. Vincent merged with Providence hospital and it made sense to the board to merge the two credit unions together. “It was never difficult to have people join, as the rates were good and the members had jobs and good salaries, so we always grew, except when we were almost closed down at the beginning. The challenge was trying to get the members to take out loans so our ratio to savings would be acceptable”.

Vachal does want to point out that during the merging of the two hospitals , her cousin, Col. Al Snider from Madigan Hospital/For Lewis, was the commander that transported the remaining patients from the old St. Vincent’s (Westover) to the new/current Providence St. Vincent Medical Hospital.

She retired in December 2011 from Providence Health & Services as the Purchasing Regional Manager of Oregon, and now enjoys travelling, wintering in Arizona, dancing and volunteering. “I like that the Credit Union is member-owned, I do have a say and it is separate from the hospital”. We agree with you 100%.

Providence Federal Credit Union was founded in 1962 and serves nearly 13,800 members with over \$125 million in assets. Providence Federal Credit Union serves Providence employees and employees in the health care industry with two full-service branches and three Service Centers in Oregon and one in Washington. To learn more about Providence Federal Credit Union, visit their web site at www.providencecu.org.

###



Left to right: Gloria Hall, Vera West, Sharon Vachal, Howard Harris, Sylvia Tscharnner and Alva Hurst



Left to right: Shirley Cate, President/CEO, Sharon Vachal and Mary Savage, Providence Federal Credit Union Board Chair