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## **Credit Union Cherry Blossom Run Awards 2017 Les Kinion Outstanding Service Award To Michelle Carter In Recognition Of Her Tireless Dedication To The Runner's Rite Of Spring**

*Award Honors the Memory of Longtime Race Volunteer Les Kinion*

**April 1, 2017, Washington, DC:** As is always the case at the pre-race dinner for the Credit Union Cherry Blossom Run, nervous tension was in the air this year. The invited athletes were eager to run, race committee members had myriad last minute details running through their minds, and credit union dignitaries were excited to share the news of their fundraising success for the 45th edition of "The Runner's Rite of Spring." To top it off, one dedicated race committee member was about to receive the coveted Les Kinion Outstanding Service Award - an award established in 2015 to ensure the memory of Kinion's outstanding service to the running world in general, and the Cherry Blossom Run specifically, is not forgotten.

"Les Kinion was very much at the heart and soul of the Cherry Blossom race committee for over 20 years," said Race Director Phil Stewart. "He coordinated the screen printing of the t-shirts, packaged and delivered over 150 separate packets for committee members and others, and worked all race weekend long - always with a smile and effusive spirit that rejuvenated even the most tired among us. There wasn't a single thing that Les wouldn't do to help out the race."

Stewart went on to add: "This year's Kinion Award recipient, Michelle Carter, is the Credit Union Cherry Blossom Run's double shot of espresso. Her incredible energy has touched every part of the race from her decade and a half serving as the volunteer coordinator to the numerous other tasks she has taken on for the event. Michelle mirrors Les Kinion's passion for the event, which makes her a most worthy recipient of the 2017 Les Kinion Outstanding Service Award."

Fellow race committee members who nominated Carter for the award said: "Michelle is efficient, a go-getter, and gets things done. She is enthusiastic, witty, and makes everyone forget it is 4 a.m., dark and chilly." And, "Michelle's insight and familiarity with every aspect of the race makes her the go-to person when making decisions regarding all aspects of the event. Last year - the year of the wind - she was a vital resource, knowing how and where to eliminate signs, tents, etc. and how it would impact volunteers and operations."

By trade, Les Kinion was a Baltimore fire fighter with Engine Company 43. By passion, he was first a runner and then a running club officer and race director. In 1970, Les co-founded the Baltimore Road Runners Club, one of the earliest chapters of the Road Runners Club of America. In 1973 he helped launch the first Maryland Marathon. After retiring in 1986, Les moved to Bishopville, MD and worked on hundreds of races on the Maryland-Delaware Coast. He became involved with the Cherry Blossom Run over 20 years ago, and was active until he passed away in July 2014 at the age of 78.

Since 2002, the Credit Union Cherry Blossom 10 Mile and 5K Run-Walk have raised over \$8 million for the Children's Miracle Network Hospitals. The 2017 event marks the 16th year of title sponsorship by Credit Union Miracle Day.

### **About the Credit Union Cherry Blossom Ten Mile:**

The Credit Union Cherry Blossom is known as "The Runner's Rite of Spring" in the Nation's Capital. The staging area for the event is on the Washington Monument Grounds and the course passes in sight of all of the major Washington, DC Memorials. The event serves as a fundraiser for the Children's Miracle Network Hospitals, a consortium of 170 premier children's hospitals across North America. About one-third of the funds raised support Washington, DC's own Children's National ("Children's Hospital"). The event also funds two \$5,000 Road Runners Club of America "Roads Scholar" grants designed to support up-and-coming U.S. distance running talent.

Credit Union Miracle Day, Inc., a consortium of credit unions and credit union suppliers in partnership with CUNA Mutual Group and PSCU, is the title sponsor of the Credit Union Cherry Blossom Ten Mile Run 5K Run-Walk and Kids' Run. Supporting sponsors include E-Trade, Gatorade, Gold's Gym, Mamma Lucia, MarathonFoto, MedStar Sports Medicine, Navy Federal Credit Union, Orrick, Potomac River Running, Suburban Solutions, Under Armour and the YMCA.

The event is a proud member of the PRRO Circuit (PRRO.org), a series of non-marathon prize money circuit with events in Tampa, FL; Washington, DC; Spokane, WA; Utica, NY; and Pittsburgh, PA. The circuit is committed to a drug-free sport and funds USADA to conduct drug testing at all circuit events. In 2017, the winning male and female at Cherry Blossom will earn the \$10,000 PRRO Super Bonus if they go on to win the PRRO Championship at the EQT Pittsburgh Ten Miler in October 2017; if they place in the top 10 at the PRRO Championship, they will earn the PRRO Event Champion's bonus of \$1,500.

In addition to being sanctioned by USA Track & Field and the Road Runners Club of America, the Credit Union Cherry Blossom Run has earned Gold Level Inspire Certification from the Council For Responsible Sport in recognition of its legacy of commitment to sustainability and thoughtful resource management. To learn more, visit [www.CherryBlossom.org](http://www.CherryBlossom.org).

### **About America's Credit Unions:**

Credit unions provide consumers choices for financial services such as checking accounts, investments and loans of all kinds including mortgages. Funds are federally insured, but unlike banks, there are no stockholders at credit unions. Earnings are returned to member-owners in the form of lower loan rates, higher savings rates, low or no-fee products and services. The credit union philosophy of placing members' needs first is why more than 108

million Americans do their banking at one of America's 6,063 credit unions. Credit unions are for everyone - no matter where you live, there is a credit union to meet your needs.

To find a credit union near you visit: [www.asmarterchoice.org](http://www.asmarterchoice.org) or [www.culookup.com](http://www.culookup.com).

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