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Rick Pillow honored with AACUL's Eagle Award

Washington, D.C. (December 8, 2020) – Rick Pillow, president of the Virginia Credit Union League (VACUL), was recognized with the 2020 Eagle Award by the American Association of Credit Union Leagues (AACUL) during AACUL's virtual 2020 Winter Meeting last week.

The Eagle Award is AACUL's highest honor and was established in 1981 to recognize a League President who has an outstanding record of achievement at the league level, a willingness to speak out on critical and controversial issues, demonstrated leadership beyond the league level, innovation in creating or implementing new ideas, and an unremitting dedication to credit union personal principles and an unflagging focus on important issues.

Rick Pillow is the third president of the Virginia Credit Union League and has served in that position for more than 20 years.

"I'm honored to be recognized by my League peers with this year's Eagle Award," said Pillow. "There are a lot of wonderful people who share in this award -- and I've been truly blessed during my 40-year career in the credit union system to work with and for people who helped me grow both personally and professionally. This award also holds tremendous personal significance for me, with my friend, mentor and predecessor, the late Gene Farley, having been awarded the first Eagle Award almost 40 years ago."

Under his leadership, the League strategically established new headquarters in Virginia's capital, Richmond. The Credit Union House of Virginia is located across the street from the Supreme Court of Virginia and just two blocks from the Capitol building and Capitol Square, home to Virginia's legislature. Pillow personally led the fundraising effort for the facility, securing more than \$1.1 million in contributions from Virginia credit unions in support of renovations at the facility.

Pillow's advocacy accomplishments also include the advancement of financial education in Virginia schools, despite opposition from education groups. VACUL, along with Virginia credit unions and key partners, were among the leading organizations to lobby for a state law requiring Virginia high school students to receive personal finance and economics instruction as a requirement for graduation. Successfully passed in 2011, the law today means Virginia is one of only six states nationally to require a standalone personal finance course. Currently, under Pillow's leadership, the league continues to engage with this effort, training upward of 400 educators each year and providing them with resources to better teach this course.

Pillow also champions Virginia's credit unions' commitment to charitable giving, community service and the promotion of financial wellbeing. During his tenure, he has led the Virginia Credit Union League's efforts to support credit unions' initiatives in those areas, including the formation of a charitable foundation; fundraising for various charitable causes, including \$3.5 million for Children's Miracle

Network Hospitals since 2003; and financial education initiatives that have reached 437,000 students since 2000 with lessons on money management and personal finance.

“Presenting this award to Rick was an honor. A true gentleman, he is devoted to the credit union movement and the ‘great Commonwealth of Virginia’. And that is apparent in his work, day in and day out,” praised Diana Dykstra, AACUL Chair and President and CEO of the California and Nevada Credit Union Leagues. “He is deeply respected by his credit unions, his staff and his league colleagues nationwide.”

“Rick is a focused, determined and untiring leader. As an advocacy organization, the League works year-round to protect and promote credit unions. In leading that charge, Rick works tirelessly to attend legislative events and fundraisers; build working relationships with key lawmakers; and develop the league’s advocacy strategy,” shared Brad Miller, executive director of AACUL.

Pillow’s service to credit unions extends beyond Virginia, including leadership roles on the Boards of Directors for the Credit Union National Association (2006-2008); the American Association of Credit Union Leagues (2003-2009); the national Credit Union House in Washington, D.C. (2001-2009); the national Credit Union House’s original Construction Oversight Committee (2000-2001) and The Raiffeisen Group (TRGroup) (2017-present), a consortium of seven credit union leagues across the nation delivering products and services to more than 700 credit unions.

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Photo Caption: Virginia Credit Union League President and CEO Rick Pillow

ABOUT THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF CREDIT UNION LEAGUES

The American Association of Credit Union Leagues (AACUL) is the national association for the state and regional credit union leagues/associations throughout the United States. AACUL’s mission is to cultivate the success of individual leagues as well as the collective League System by supporting league efforts to advocate, communicate, collaborate and influence policy on behalf of credit unions nationwide. We partner with CUNA to foster the CUNA-League System relationship and the prosperity of the credit union movement. AACUL membership is comprised of every state credit union association/league, proudly representing credit unions and their members in all 50 states and the District of Columbia.