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Credit Union Cherry Blossom Run Presents 2020 Les Kinion Outstanding Service Award to Nita Lalla Roncone in Recognition of Her Many Years of Service to the Race

Award honors the memory of longtime race volunteer Les Kinion

September 1, 2020, Washington, DC: Credit Union Cherry Blossom organizers announced today that Nita Lalla Roncone has been named the 2020 recipient of the Les Kinion Outstanding Service Award. Established in 2015, the award is typically presented at the pre-race dinner for the Credit Union Cherry Blossom Run, but Covid-19 conspired against the race and all accompanying activities this past April.

Race organizers had hoped to announce the award at the annual summer picnic instead, but it, too, was recently cancelled. So Race Director Phil Stewart, and Deputy Director Becky Lambros decided to surprise Roncone with a front-porch ceremony at her home in Alexandria, Virginia, followed by lunch at a nearby restaurant, on Wednesday, August 26.

"Nita is certainly a most deserving recipient of the Les Kinion Outstanding Service Award, following in the footsteps of past honorees Irv Newman, George Tarrico, Michelle Carter, Jean Arthur, and Glenn Klenk," said Stewart. "In her role as volunteer coordinator, Nita tirelessly enrolls, assigns, motivates and thanks the over 2,000 volunteers who are the backbone of the race each year."

Roncone said, "When Becky, Phil, and Bob (Burgess, the official race photographer) showed up at my house - it felt like winning the Publisher's Clearinghouse sweepstakes. To be presented with this award as chosen by my peers is indeed a great honor, especially for doing something I love so much."

Stewart added: "Les Kinion was very much at the heart and soul of the Cherry Blossom race committee for over 20 years. 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."

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 in the early 1990s, and was active until he passed away in July 2014 at the age of 78.

Held virtually this year, the 2020 Credit Union Cherry Blossom Runs marked the 19th year of title sponsorship by Credit Union Miracle Day. Since 2002, over \$10 million has been raised for the Children's Miracle Network Hospitals, including \$440,000 this year. Of that \$440,000, \$66,000 came from runners donating their entry fees instead of asking for a refund when race weekend in our Nation's Capital was wiped out by Covid-19.

About the Credit Union Cherry Blossom Ten Mile

The Credit Union Cherry Blossom Ten Mile, organized by Cherry Blossom, Inc., a 501c(3) chapter of the Road Runners Club of America, 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.

The Credit Union Cherry Blossom Run is also part of the [National Cherry Blossom Festival](#), "America's Greatest Springtime Celebration."

Credit Union Miracle Day, Inc., a consortium of credit unions and credit union suppliers in partnership with CUNA Mutual Group, PCSU and CO-OP Financial Services, is the title sponsor of the Credit Union Cherry Blossom Ten Mile Run, 5K Run-Walk and Kids' Run. Presenting sponsors include ASICS, the official shoe and apparel sponsor; Garmin, the presenting technology sponsor; Gold's Gym, presenting sponsor of the race pace groups; and Med Star Health, presenting sponsor of the Fall Kickoff Reception. Supporting sponsors include E-Trade, Gatorade, Honey Stinger, Mamma Lucia, Potomac River Running, Suburban Solutions and UPS.

The event is a proud member of the PRRO Circuit ([PRRO.org](#)), a series of major non-marathon prize money road races in Tampa, FL; Washington, DC; Spokane, WA; and Utica, NY. The circuit is committed to a drug-free sport and funds drug testing at all circuit events in compliance with the standards of international and U.S. drug testing authorities.

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](#) and follow the event on social media @CUCB and #CUCB2020.

About Credit Union Miracle Day

Credit Union Miracle Day is a partnership of over 100 credit unions, CUSOs and partner organizations united to sponsor the Credit Union Cherry Blossom Ten Mile Run promoting awareness of the credit union difference and benefitting Children's Miracle Network Hospitals nationwide.

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 115 million Americans do their banking at one of America's 5,500 credit unions. Credit unions are for everyone - no matter where you live, there is a credit union to meet your needs.

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