

AACUC Announces 2026 African American Credit Union Hall of Fame Honorees

SNELLVILLE, GA, UNITED STATES, October 22, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The African-American Credit Union Coalition ([AACUC](#)) will induct five credit union leaders into its [African American Credit Union Hall of Fame](#) during its Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony during the Governmental Affairs Conference in Washington, D.C. on March 3, 2026 at the Hamilton Hotel, sponsored by VISA. The 2026 honorees are:

- Creighton P. Blackwell, Chief Community Impact & Public Affairs Officer, Coastal Credit Union
- Leigh Brady, President and CEO, State Employees' Credit Union of North Carolina
- Carolyn Jordan, Chief Growth Officer, Neighborhood Credit Union
- Sati Smith, Chief Executive Officer, Diversified Members Credit Union
- Max Villaronga, President/CEO, Raiz Federal Credit Union

The African American Credit Union Hall of Fame recognizes individuals who have contributed to the credit union movement by providing financial services and access to financial capital for African Americans and people of color. The 2026 cohort represents more than 135 years of industry experience and has advanced communities across the country



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including in North Carolina, Texas and Michigan.

Creighton P. Blackwell is a seasoned executive with over 30 years of leadership in business and community impact. He serves as Chief Community Impact and Public Affairs Officer at Coastal Credit Union, with prior roles as Vice President of Corporate Affairs & Community Engagement and Vice President of Retail Banking. Blackwell actively serves on numerous nonprofit boards, earning multiple awards for his contributions. He is a University of North Carolina Chapel Hill graduate and a Certified Innovation Executive from Stanford. Blackwell is a passionate speaker and advocate for sustainability, economic development and financial education. He enjoys coaching sports and time with his family.

Leigh Brady is the President and CEO of State Employees' Credit Union (SECU). With 38 years of service at SECU, Brady has served in various operations positions, including Chief Operating Officer, helping to grow the credit union, which serves over 2.9 million members. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in Accounting from North Carolina State University and a Master of Business Administration from Meredith College. She serves on the Carolinas Credit Union League Board of Directors and the Executive Committee of America's Credit Unions CEO Council. She is also a member of the International Women's Forum of the Carolinas.

Carolyn Jordan is the Chief Growth Officer at Neighborhood Credit Union, overseeing digital banking, data analytics, marketing, product development and advocacy. She serves as President of the AACUC Texas Regional Chapter and the Neighborhood Credit Union Foundation. Jordan is a former Chair of America's Credit Unions Operations Council and a past member of the Dallas Federal Reserve's Consumer Advisory Council. Awarded by the Dallas Business Journal as a 2024 C-Suite Leader and a 2023 Woman in Technology, Jordan's leadership spans 46 years. She holds a Master of Science in Business Analytics from Texas A&M-Commerce and marketing certification from Southern Methodist University's Cox School of Business.

Sati Smith is the Chief Executive Officer of Diversified Members Credit Union (DMCU), where she has served as CEO for two years following more than 20 years in the financial industry. An advocate for financial inclusion for all, regardless of socioeconomic status, Smith guides DMCU into a new era of growth and enhanced member experience. She serves on several boards, including the Detroit Public Safety Foundation and Girl Scouts of Southeastern Michigan and is an ambassador for the Voices of Black Women cancer research study. Passionate about empowerment, she shares her journey to inspire young women to pursue their dreams.

Max Villaronga has served as President/CEO of Raiz Federal Credit Union since 2014. His experience includes working in various industries and notable organizations such as The Home Depot and the U.S. Marines. He has focused on creating a culture centered on human dignity and leads his team to value DEIBA as both morally important and a strategic advantage. Villaronga holds an MBA from the University of Texas at Dallas, is a School of Retail Banking at Furman graduate, and holds Certified Chief Executive and Development Educator designations. He serves on the board of the Underserved Communities Foundation, El Paso Symphony, El Paso

Chamber and NLCUP.

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About the African American Credit Union Hall of Fame History

On October 16, 2008, the AACUC unveiled an exhibit featuring African Americans in the credit union movement the first 100 years at the America's Credit Union Museum in Manchester, N.H. Continuing with that effort, the Funding Development Committee, led by Helen Godfrey Smith, created the African American Credit Union Hall of Fame. This virtual hall of fame was created to serve as a fundraiser and to honor and recognize African Americans who have and are contributing to the credit union movement – many who are unsung heroes and trailblazers. To be inducted, individuals must meet the following criteria: 1) provided in excess of 10 years of service in the credit union industry; 2) worked to provide financial services for the general public; and 3) contributed at least four significant accomplishments that provided access to financial capital for African-Americans and majority-ethnic communities.

About the African-American Credit Union Coalition

The AACUC is a 501c3 non-profit organization created in 1999 to increase diversity within the credit union community through advocacy and professional development. A recipient of the 2022 Anchor Award from the National Credit Union Foundation for its leadership and global efforts unifying financial industries in eradicating racism amid the COVID-19 pandemic and social unrest in 2020, AACUC has become an all-encompassing organization for executives, professionals, volunteers, consultants and regulators within the financial services industry. AACUC is considered a leader in the credit union movement, adopting the 8th Cooperative Principle (Diversity, Equity and Inclusion) and enabling credit unions to become more diverse and inclusive. Learn more at www.aacuc.org or on social media at Facebook.com/AACUC1, LinkedIn.com/company/AACUC, X.com/AACUC1 or Instagram.com/aacucctc.

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