

Greg Inman Servant Leadership Award (cunacouncils.org)

Word-counts:

Nomination Statement: 350 words or less;

Letters of Recommendation (minimum x2, maximum x4): 300 words or less.

Deadline: 12/18/2023

Eligibility Criteria:

To be considered for this award, an individual must:

Have a past or current connection to the credit union industry.

In their work and actions, have demonstrated key characteristics of servant leader philosophy:

- Values People: Believes, serves, and listens to others
- Develops People: Provides learning, growth, encouragement and affirmation
- Builds Community: Develops strong collaborative and personal relationships inside and outside of the industry and within their own communities
- Displays Authenticity: Open, accountable, and willing to learn from others
- Provides Leadership: Foresees the future, takes initiative, and establishes goals
- Shares Leadership: Facilitating and sharing of power

Nomination Statement

Like many who dedicate their lives to serving others, Kyle Markland's inspiration came from hardship. Seeing his father lose his job in the early 1980s set the stage for a singular vision, in which service to those struggling to manage their finances met the core concept of employee empowerment.

Kyle knew that by listening to employees and building their confidence and trust, he could instill in them the value of seeing members as unique individuals and listening to their needs. This, he believed, would build a culture of trust, transparency, and openness within the credit union, leading to the best possible service.

Kyle experienced criticism for his beliefs at first, but did not waver. He built his career over 40 years, at all levels in the credit union movement, supporting and building organizations designed to maximize value.

When approached about setting up Municipal Credit Union for its next 100 years, he was initially reluctant. MCU was struggling under the burdens of conservatorship and the pandemic. He understood that conserved credit unions are rarely successfully rehabilitated. At the same time, he also understood the history of MCU and the needs of the New York City community.

Accepting the challenge, Kyle discovered that MCU members had stayed loyal. Good work over many years was being acknowledged. He also recognized that overcoming tough times makes people stronger. Here was a problem with a powerful solution.

After assembling a new board and supervisory committee, he listened to long-serving employees and learned more about MCU and its deep ties to its community. He instilled his values and lifted team morale by reminding everybody that what happens in life isn't as important as how you respond to it.

Kyle's employee empowerment was a perfect fit at MCU and employees responded: developing skills, encouraging open communication, and growing as morale reached a new high. This led to the achievement of MCU being lifted out of conservatorship a full three years ahead of schedule—a powerful testament to the leadership, values and vision Kyle brought with him.

The foundation for our next 100 years has been successfully set.

(Word-count: 350)

[Greg Inman Servant Leadership Award – CUNA Councils](#)

Testimonials

Kyle's ability to bring a sense of calm to any situation has always impressed me. Progress happens fast in all scenarios with Kyle at the helm. This quality reminds me of an inspiring phrase: "We don't have enough time to move quickly." In each new situation, Kyle spends more time patiently listening than talking. He doesn't care at what level in a company the speaker is employed. If they have experience, they have the potential to contribute to the upward trajectory he is constructing.

When I came on board, Kyle was speaking in terms of "charting a new course" and "setting the foundation for the next 100 years." He delighted in the fact MCU members had stayed loyal, despite conservatism; and I believe this inspired him to deliver.

In a sea of financial complexity, raising team morale among employees remained a top priority for Kyle. Throughout his career, he has championed employee empowerment, believing with all his heart that happy workers are the most productive and dedicated people with whom a CEO can surround himself. Adding his own values to that belief resulted in the highest levels of service for members.

In the same vein, Kyle doesn't care where good ideas come from, as long as they can stand a little testing. He'll tell you if he feels that he was incorrect on a point and give credit where it's due. His achievements with Municipal Credit Union represent many things: a life-time of dedication to the movement, his naturally acquired servant-leader approach, his vision, his patience, and the fact that everybody who works for him feels valued.

He is a credit to his profession and somebody all professionals can learn from. It's with great personal pleasure that I nominate Kyle Markland.

Thomas Canty
Chairman of the Board
Municipal Credit Union

(300 words total)

Kyle and myself share a passion for the credit union movement that's reflected in our careers. I was the CFO at Municipal Credit Union when Kyle arrived, and I remember the surge of optimism that swept the company once he addressed the employees and laid out his vision. His presence created a sea change in attitudes, filled every room with energy, and instantly solidified the belief that MCU would rise again to its old heights.

Kyle is a leader who gains by giving. He builds others up, wins their trust, and gives them confidence. He shares his values and allows fellow professionals to get on with doing what they do best. He instills not just a sense of purpose, but a sense of self-belief. If an employee fears making a mistake, he tells them that mistakes aren't the end of the world, just something we learn from.

He understands that people are more efficient when they are confident rather than fearful.

Kyle's goal is to build happy teams. He knows this creates an environment members benefit from, making them feel appreciated and supported in their needs. Being aware that communities are made of individuals, he drives home the wisdom of letting members speak freely, allowing products and services to be tailored to them.

I can say that nobody was happier than myself when Kyle succeeded in bringing MCU out of conservatorship in record time. What he did for his employees and the New York City community who rely on its products and services is amazing. He took the bull by the horns, using 40 years of dedicated service as his tool of choice, and ushered in a new era for a company that had already become legendary over its 100-year history.

Jennifer Oliver
Chief Executive Officer
SCE Federal Credit Union

(300 words total)

Even with Municipal Credit Union in conservatorship and the pandemic raging, I never believed that Kyle's initial reluctance to take on that challenge was deeply felt. I thought he was assessing the odds against him at Municipal Credit Union, trying to convince himself not to take so steep a risk after 40 years spent building a great career of service. In his heart, he knew he would accept.

I had the honor of working with and learning from Kyle at Bethpage Credit Union. I looked up to him as a leader and appreciated him as a friend. He supported everyone around him and I learned what true leadership means from him. His focus is incredible, and it's matched by his enthusiasm. He is considerate and thoughtful, rather than brash or bombastic, but he fires up teams and gets results in a way that seems effortless—on the surface.

Ultimately, I was fired up enough myself to join Kyle in the challenge and I joined MCU. I watched as he encouraged everyone to be proud of their service, of MCU's history, and to get back to creating financial wins for people who need and deserve them. Kyle believes in respecting the achievements of those in the past by looking forward, embracing change, and innovating ideas that serve people now.

As Kyle led MCU into a bright new era, we succeeded in having the company certified as a Minority Depository Institution. We launched The MCU Foundation, the focal point of our vision of improving the lives of our community and members through financial education and empowerment.

This is something I am personally very proud of, and it testifies to my belief in Kyle as a great leader, a source of learning, and an inspiration.

George Chacon
Chief Strategy Officer
Municipal Credit Union

(300 words total)