

**Volunteer of the Year Nomination: Gerard “Jerry” P. Richer**  
***Vice Chairman, Board of Directors, Former Chairman of the Board,***  
***St. Mary's Credit Union***

Some volunteer leaders contribute for a season.

Others devote a lifetime.

For more than four decades, Gerard P. Richer has quietly dedicated his time, wisdom, leadership, and unwavering commitment to ensuring that St. Mary's Credit Union remained true to the cooperative principles upon which it was founded while growing into one of the strongest credit unions in Massachusetts.

His service is extraordinary not simply because of its length, but because of the lasting impact it has had on generations of members, employees, volunteers, and the community.

Jerry's story is inseparable from the story of St. Mary's Credit Union itself.

More than a century ago, his great uncles, Adelard and Louis Richer, helped establish St. Mary's Credit Union as two of its original founders, signing the institution's 1913 charter. His father, Donald Richer, continued that legacy through years of volunteer service on the Board of Directors. Jerry joined the Board in 1980, becoming Chairman in 1994 and serving in that role for more than three decades. Today, his family's commitment continues through his nephew, Timothy Richer, who serves on the Credit Union's Advisory Board.

Four generations of one family have answered the call to serve—not because they sought recognition, but because they believed deeply in the credit union philosophy of *People Helping People*.

Jerry has exemplified that philosophy throughout his tenure.

As Chairman, he provided thoughtful governance during decades of transformation within the financial services industry. He helped guide the Credit Union through periods of growth, technological advancement, economic uncertainty, leadership transitions, and strategic expansion, always ensuring that decisions reflected both sound business judgment and the cooperative values that define the organization.

His leadership style has always been grounded in humility.

Jerry leads by listening. He builds consensus. He asks thoughtful questions. He encourages collaboration while never losing sight of the Credit Union's responsibility to its members. Colleagues consistently describe him as knowledgeable, calm, thoughtful, prepared, and unwavering in his commitment to doing what is right rather than what is easy.

His distinguished career as an attorney brings valuable expertise in governance, fiduciary responsibility, and strategic oversight. Yet those who have served alongside him would tell you that his greatest strength has never been his legal knowledge. It has been his character.

He understands that volunteer leadership is not about authority—it is about stewardship.

Throughout more than forty-five years of volunteer service, Jerry has devoted countless hours preparing for meetings, mentoring fellow directors, supporting executive leadership, and helping shape the long-term vision of the organization. His guidance has provided continuity through changing economic conditions, evolving member expectations, and new opportunities for growth.

Under Jerry's leadership, St. Mary's Credit Union strengthened its position as a trusted financial institution dedicated to serving members and communities with integrity and compassion. Since Jerry became Chair in 1994:

- Assets grew from \$170,582,083 to \$1,171,264,175, including the recent merger with MetroWest Community Federal Credit
- Expanded from two to eight branches, including MetroWest
- Grew membership from 14,500 in 1993 to 55,000 in 2026

During one of the most challenging and unprecedented periods in our lifetime, Jerry provided steady, thoughtful leadership as Board Chair. He guided the credit union through the uncertainties of the COVID-19 pandemic with resilience, sound judgement, and an unwavering commitment to our members, employees, and community. His calm presence and strategic leadership helped ensure that SMCU remained strong, responsive, and well positioned for the future. In 2020,

- We achieved record level member survey results and the highest ever NPS (Net Promoter Score), which is the willingness of members to recommend St. Mary's Credit Union to others.
- We were here for our local businesses as we assisted 295 of our business members through the pandemic by providing guidance and support navigating the PPP program. We also found creative ways to assist these members with their deposit, cash management, and electronic services while the world was shut down.

- Total deposits grew over \$100 million, an increase of nearly 15%. Our members trusted St. Mary's with their deposits and their future, showing confidence in our 100+ years of experience in serving our community.
- Online Account Opening surged in 2020, with a greater than 200% increase in the number of accounts opened with 1,112 opened vs. 546 in 2019. The number of new members joining via the online channel was even more impressive with a 317% increase with 482 members choosing to join St. Mary's digitally

Equally important has been Jerry's unwavering belief that success should always be measured by the positive impact the Credit Union has on the lives of its members and the communities it serves. His leadership has helped foster a culture that values service, accountability, kindness, and community engagement—principles that continue to define the organization today.

Jerry has never sought accolades for his contributions. Instead, he has quietly and consistently given his time, energy, and wisdom because he believes in the mission of the credit union movement and the responsibility of volunteer leaders to represent the best interests of the members.

His lifetime of service reflects the very best of volunteerism and exemplifies the very best of the credit union movement. His leadership has strengthened not only St. Mary's Credit Union, but also the cooperative principles that have guided it for more than a century. His leadership, integrity, and humility have left an indelible mark on St. Mary's Credit Union and the communities it serves.

For his remarkable commitment, enduring leadership, and unwavering dedication to the philosophy of *People Helping People*, Gerard P. Richer is exceptionally deserving of recognition as Volunteer of the Year.