

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Lucy Ito Named 2026 Recipient of the Renée Sattiewhite Neoteric Changemaker Award

National honor recognizes a career of modernization, collaboration and global impact across the credit union movement.

WASHINGTON, D.C. - The African-American Credit Union Coalition (AACUC) and 40 Groups, Inc. announced today that Lucy Ito, one of the most respected and influential leaders in the modern credit union movement, has been selected as the 2026 Renée Sattiewhite Neoteric Changemaker Award honoree.

The national award, named for its inaugural 2023 recipient, Renée Sattiewhite, CEO and President of AACUC, recognizes individuals who demonstrate exceptional perseverance, advance the cooperative principle of “people helping people,” champion relevant and forward-looking ideas, and create meaningful programming that strengthens leadership across the credit union system. The term neoteric reflects the award’s purpose: honoring modern thinkers who advocate for new ideas and fresh approaches.

A Career Defined by Modernization, Collaboration and Global Impact

Ito’s selection reflects a career that has uniquely bridged financial regulation, international cooperative development, and industry leadership. She is widely known for her tenure as President and CEO of the National Association of State Credit Union Supervisors (NASCUS) from 2014 to 2021, where she modernized collaboration between state regulators and credit unions and strengthened coordination with federal agencies, including the NCUA.

Her leadership helped advance supervisory innovation, improve regulatory alignment, and support a more resilient and forward-looking state credit union system.

Before NASCUS, Ito held senior roles at the World Council of Credit Unions (WOCCU), where she contributed to building and expanding cooperative financial systems across Eastern Europe, Central Asia, Asia, and the Pacific. Her work supported financial inclusion, strengthened emerging credit union networks, and helped communities in developing and transition economies build sustainable cooperative finance structures.

“Lucy Ito is my personal SHERO!” said Renée Sattiewhite, President and CEO of AACUC. “In every role she has taken on, Lucy has demonstrated remarkable brilliance, effectiveness, and diligence. I have been inspired time and again by her ability to strengthen organizations and lead transformative change. Lucy is a force of nature, and I couldn’t be more excited to see her receive this well-deserved honor.”

A Trusted Leader in Times of Transition

In 2025, Ito returned from retirement to serve as interim CEO for California’s Credit Unions during a major leadership transition, an appointment that underscored her reputation as a steady, strategic, and widely trusted leader.

Honoring a Modern Changemaker

“Lucy Ito exemplifies the spirit of the Renée Sattiewhite Neoteric Changemaker Award. Her career reflects a rare combination of regulatory expertise, global cooperative insight, and a deep commitment to strengthening the credit union system for future generations. She has consistently championed new ideas and practical solutions that move the movement forward.”

Dennis Sullivan, Founder & CEO, 40 Groups, Inc. | Award Sponsor

Ito will be formally recognized at the 2026 AACUC Annual Conference on August 6, 2026.

About the Renée Sattiewhite Neoteric Changemaker Award

Established in 2023 and named for AACUC President and CEO Renée Sattiewhite, this national award honors individuals who demonstrate perseverance, advance the cooperative mission of “people helping people,” advocate for relevant and modern ideas, and create programming that strengthens leadership across the credit union movement. Nominations are open to all and must include clear documentation supporting the candidate’s qualifications, along with a curriculum vitae or resume. Additional reference materials may be requested during the evaluation process.

About 40 Groups, Inc.

40 Groups, Inc. creates high-impact leadership forums for CEOs, CFOs and Chairs in the community banking and credit union industries. Each Group convenes top leaders for deep-dive discussions, thought leadership, and relationship-building that supports transformational change. Learn more at www.40groups.com.

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