Dave Arian: former ILWU President and Port Commissioner had radical roots

David Arian, a major force in the ILWU for four decades who identified with the rank-and-file membership, called himself a “radical” and rose to become International President, died January 2 at the age of 72, surrounded by friends and family in his hometown of San Pedro. Arian was diagnosed with an aggressive thyroid cancer last summer that failed to respond to treatment.

Humble beginnings, deep roots

Alan David Arian was born in 1946 and raised in a modest home in San Pedro by his mother Rose Shelton and Father Louis. Both parents came from Eastern European Jewish families who were politically active and sympathetic to left-wing causes – especially the labor movement.

His mother took him to picket lines as a child, including protests against the killing of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg who were executed in 1953 for espionage. His father was known on the docks as “Honest Lou,” and strongly supported Harry Bridges, the longtime ILWU President and co-founder who shared the Arian family’s left-wing political views and passion for social justice.

Early longshoring

Arian started working on the docks in 1965 while still in high school. He had mixed feelings about his first waterfront experiences, which included unloading heavy stalks of bananas arriving from Central America with hidden snakes and tarantulas that came alive after the creatures had been trapped for weeks in the cold, dark hold of a ship.

Arian’s dad tried to ease his son’s entry into the ILWU by offering him a valuable “sponsor” slot that would have allowed Dave to quickly enter Local 13 as a “B-man and skip ahead of other Casuals. He rejected the “sponsor” offer, explaining: “I had a very difficult time accepting my dad’s sponsorship. By then, I had become friends with other Casuals who were not allowed into the union simply because they did not have a relative to sponsor them.”

Fighting racism

Arian also knew that the sponsor-ship system had been abused by some and that it served to restrict the entry of African Americans and women into the union ranks. So he continued working as a Casual while becoming immersed in the exploding civil rights and anti-war movements. Before long, Arian was arrested during a sympathy sit-in at a federal building to support Rev. Martin Luther King’s non-violent fight against Jim Crow segregation. He joined a New Left political group and

Remembering our brother Dave Arian:

The entire ILWU family mourned the loss of former ILWU President Dave Arian. Dave mentored generations of longshore workers in Southern California and up and down the Coast. He is pictured here addressing a crowd in San Pedro on June 29, 2018.
ILWU members help LA Teachers win strike to improve public schools

Los Angeles teachers won a carefully-organized six-day strike in January that will deliver smaller class sizes, more nurses and counselors, and greater accountability of private charter schools in the nation’s second largest school system.

Early challenges

Organizing for the successful strike began long before April of 2017, when bargaining officially started. The process was extra difficult because a majority of school board members had won their seats with backing from private charter school advocates who are funded by wealthy, anti-union business interests. These Board members then hired a Superintendents who “adopted” 63 public schools during the strike – and strongly favored private charter schools.

Contract goals help the public

The union was open from the beginning about their bargaining goals because four out of their five goals were designed to improve the quality of education for students by reducing class sizes, increasing the number of nurses and counselors, adding funds for classroom supplies, placing a cap on the number of private charter schools and holding existing charter schools more accountable. The only pocketbook issue for teachers was their effort to secure a 6.5% raise.

Saving public education

The struggle by 55,000 teachers, nurses and counselors who care for 550,000 students in Los Angeles was initially discussed within the union ranks as a battle to protect public education. Union members then worked hard to spread the word about how smaller class sizes and more school nurses and counselors would benefit students. This slow, patient outreach work to talk with parents paid-off when families backed the striking teachers – because they realized that a win for the union was a win for students.

Supporting quality public schools: ILWU members participated in a solidarity campaign organized by the Southern California District Council that helped teachers in LA win a six-day strike for smaller class sizes, more nurses and counselors, a cap on new private charter schools and greater accountability for existing charters. The community-wide effort involved hundreds of volunteers who “adopted” 63 public schools during the strike.

History lessons

Many of us today take public education for granted, but it only continued on page 3
ILWU Locals show holiday spirit with generous toy drives

ILWU members along the Coast organized events to bring a happier holiday season for thousands of families who are struggling to make ends meet. Local unions partnered with charity groups to donate toys, money and time to their communities.

Southern California Children’s Christmas Party

Now in its 18th year, the 2018 Southern California ILWU Children’s Christmas Party helped approximately 3,000 kids have a happy holiday season. Over 100 volunteers made this year’s event possible. The ILWU committee reached out to 35 local non-profits that identified families needing assistance.

The effort was made possible by Locals 13, 26, 63, 94, the Federated Auxiliary 8, Southern California Pensioners, Longshoremen Memorial Association and the Local 63 Memorial Association. The Holiday Events Committee works year-round to plan and organize the holiday project.

Bay Area toy drive

Toys for Tots donations were gathered at Local 10’s hall before Christmas. The success of the event was made possible from contributions by members of Local 10, 34, 73, 91 and Bay Area Pensioners.

Local 19’s Christmas for Kids.

Generous contributions from Local 19 members allowed the 2018 Christmas for Kids committee support 10 different agencies in the greater Pogo Sound area. The Committee’s budget of almost $23,000 was enhanced by discounts provided by Fred Meyer stores. The combined effort yielded a huge amount of clothes, toys, games, sleeping bags and bedding as well as gift cards that agencies distributed to needy families and individuals.

Presenting from Partners in Portland

ILWU Locals 8, 40, 92, the IBU and Portland Local 8 Federal Credit Union, held a toy drive that worked with “Presents from Partners,” a program of Labor’s Community Service Agency. The toys were distributed at a labor-sponsored luncheon for working families who have been affected by unemployment and temporary hardships.

Local 4 Bike Drive

For the 10th year in a row, Local 4 members raised money to purchase and assemble 106 bikes for children served by the Children’s Justice Center, which assists children who are victims of criminal-legal abuse.

Tacoma toy drive

This year’s Local 23 Toy Drive was the most successful so far. ILWU members and pensioners from Locals 23, 35 and 98 donated $48,834.35 and that enabled the committee to help over 940 children with two toys each this Christmas. The Toy Drive committee purchased most of the toys, jackets and bikes from the local union Fred Meyer store with added special discounts to make the donations go further. The Toy Drive Committee was headed by Trustee Kyle Copeland and members, Mandy Peterson, Amy James, Kimberly Boespflug, Melissa Burkes and Holly Heilshier along with many other Local 23 members, family and friends who also volunteered to be part of making so many local children’s holidays a little happier.

Presents from Partners:

ILWU members in Portland teamed up with the Local 8 Federal Credit Union and the local labor community for a toy drive to benefit families affected by unemployment.

ILWU members help LA Teachers win strike to improve public schools

continued from page 2

happened a century ago after decades of struggle – much of it led by the labor movement that battled to move children out of factories and off the streets into classrooms. The belief then – and now – is that quality public education helps give every American a better opportunity to succeed in life.

Protecting public schools

Several months ago, the ILWU’s Southern California District Council (SCDC) learned that another private charter school was planning to open in Wilmington. Like all private charters, they would be funded with dollars diverted from public schools. SCDC leaders immediately contacted their union brothers and sisters at the teacher’s union, the United Teachers of Los Angeles (UTLA). The SCDC then participated in public meetings that were organized to educate and inform parents about the latest threat to public education. The Dispatcher featured a report about this meeting at the Harry Bridges Span School that included union members, parents and students. The problem with charter schools draining public resources and failing to be accountable was addressed – along with the need to support teachers in their contract negotiations.

Second meeting builds support

A few weeks later the SCDC sponsored a town hall meeting at the ILWU Memorial Association building in Wilmington, with a panel that provided an update about the teacher’s contract negotiations and efforts to cap the number of charter schools in Los Angeles. Once again, an appeal was made to build community support for the teachers’ contract bargaining.

Unions “adopt-a-school”

Once teachers voted overwhelmingly to authorize a strike, the SCDC began mobilizing ILWU locals in the Harbor Area and reaching out to other nearby unions. The goal was to have union members join the “adopt-a-school” program by helping at their local school during a strike. In practice, this meant picketing with teachers and ensuring that an ILWU members or union volunteer was always on the picket line so the teachers would know that “we have your back.” It also meant bringing them food when they were marching on the picket lines. ILWU members worked with teacher union Chapter Chairs and Picket Captains to make sure picket line were staffed, fed and emotionally supported.

In total, the SCDC effort resulted in 63 schools being “adopted” in the cities of Carson, Gardena, Harbor City, Lomita, San Pedro and Wilmington. Hundreds of ILWU members participated, as did officers from Locals 13, 20, 63, 65, 68, 94, Auxiliary, Pensioners, and the SCDC – along with officials from the Marine Firemen and Steelworkers Union. The SCDC also provided signs declaring that “The ILWU supports teachers,” which were produced and continued on page 7.
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attended frequent meetings. He studied the writings of Karl Marx and other revolutionaries while traveling across the country to support labor and community protests involving other unions in different industries.

Early leadership & lessons

In 1966, Arian and friends opened a Community Action Center in a garage where young people came to learn about the farmerworker grape boycott, civil rights movement and growing opposition to the Vietnam War. The project expanded and attracted many followers - but also angered some community members who eventually burned it down. Arian later worked with those responsible and became friends with them while working together in the union.

Devouring books

During this four-year period in the late 1960’s, Arian grew long hair and a beard, attended hundreds of meetings and devoured dozens of books a year – receiving the equivalent of a college education that shaped his political views for life, including the idea that working class people and unions could play a key role in driving positive social change.

Falling in love

During this time of intense learning and growth, the young leader maintained his roots in San Pedro where he fell in love with Roxanne Nielsen, got married and had two children, their son Sean and daughter Justine. The new responsibilities at home sparked an important talk with Dave’s father.

“That’s when my dad sat me down and said, ‘you have a family now. It’s time to go to work.’ Soon after, he married and had two children, their son Sean and daughter Justine. The new responsibilities at home sparked an important talk with Dave’s father.

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“ ‘That’s when my dad sat me down and said, ‘you have a family now. It’s time to go to work.’ ”

So in 1969 I became a full-fledged member of Local 13.”

Opposing discrimination

Although Arian ultimately benefited from the sponsorship system that helped him enter Local 13 more quickly, he remained troubled by the policy’s unfairness. After becoming a registered member of the union, Arian continued to help causals organize, eventually resulting in a “casual hall” with a rotational dispatch system that assured equal opportunity for everyone, including women and African Americans.

Almost 40 years later in 2008, he devoted space in his book, The Right to Get in the Fight, where he explained his feelings and described the different actions that he and others took against all forms of discrimination on the job.

1971 strike

Arian was involved in the controversial ILWU longshore strike of 1971 that was backed by 96.4% of workers and was especially popular with younger workers who were worried about the difficult transition underway from “break-bulk” to containerization. In 1969, Arian joined those who criticized Harry Bridges for negotiating contracts in 1960 and 1966 that provided terms for the transition to containerers. The criticism of Bridges triggered a strong response from “honest Lou,” who told his son to show more respect toward the ILWU President.

The 1971 strike became the longest in ILWU history at 134 days, but it won little more than what had been on the negotiating table before the walkout. Most importantly, employers won the right to increase the size of a “steady” workforce, allowing them to pick only workers they wanted and bypass the hiring hall dispatch system for key jobs at Local 10 and 13.

As Arian grew and gained more experience, he came to appreciate the difficult decisions that Bridges had made years before to help longshore workers cope with new technology. After Bridges retired, he asked Arian to represent him at a meeting of foreign union officials in Vienna – a gesture of respect that Arian never forgot.

Rising through the ranks

When Arian became a registered longshore worker in 1969, the radical young workers of the establishment continued his activism and organizing – while also running for union office. He started with a slot on the Local 13 Executive Board – where he was soundly defeated. He ran again and won a seat on the Southern California District Council (SCDC), the ILWU regional body that coordinates political activity.

Two years later he became President of the SCDC, where he promoted voter registration, political action and solidarity efforts with other unions.

President of Local 13

In 1979 he was elected to serve as a Relief Business Agent during week-ends and won races for the Local 13 Executive Board. The following year he was elected as a delegate to both the Longshore Caucus and International Convention. And five years later, in 1984, he was elected President of Local 13 – the largest and fastest-growing ILWU local on the mainland – where he served two terms and kept an eye on higher office.

Established leadership

“Top positions at the ILWU Internationally had changed little from 1934 to 1977. President Harry Bridges and Secretary Lou Goldblatt were both popul- lar leaders who won elections every three years without much opposition until they retired together in 1977. Local 34 President Jimmy Herman won the next election for International President with backing from Bridges and remained there for 14 years until retiring in 1991.”

Changing industry & demographics

Arian and many around him thought that the next generation of ILWU leaders had to fully understand and address the dramatic changes underway in the logistics industry caused by globalization – including an explosion of container traffic and jobs at the mega-port of Los Angeles and Long Beach. Arian had recently won two terms at the ILWU’s largest longshore local that was ground-zero for globalization – while leaving him well-positioned to run for International President.

Beyond the docks, membership in the Warehouse Division was declining as shops moved inland or fled offshore to Mexico and Asia. Another change underway was the demographic shift in the ILWU’s ranks, with an older generation of workers represented by Harry Bridges and Jimmy Herman (who remained in office until they were 76 and 67) being replaced by younger members. Arian felt the time was right to run, and began assembling a team of supporters to win the 1991 election.

Contested election

Arian knew his competitor would be Randy C. Vekich, the union’s inter- national Vice-President for the Main- land. Vekich was a seasoned member of the Longshore Negotiating Commit- tee and leader of Local 24 in Aberdeen, Washington – the nation’s largest log exporter at the time. Vekich was 52 years old, just a little older than Arian who was 45, and he enjoyed respect from many ILWU officials who saw him as a steady leader who would maintain the legacy of Bridges and Herman. Arian, by comparison, was seen as a risky, radical outsider who some believed was “too young.”

A radical runs for president

Arian’s self-proclaimed radical political views and outspoken nature made many ILWU leaders uncomfort- able, and terrified many employers. The Journal of Commerce labeled him a “fiery radical” who “sees the world through the eyes of a socialist and activist.” Arian confirmed those fears by telling the Journal that he had “no love for the employers or the capital- ist system. I don’t believe in it. I don’t believe it benefits the interests of the working people. It never has.” Those views sounded a lot like former ILWU President Harry Bridges, who was also a lifelong socialist and made no secret of his contempt for capitalism and belief that workers would be better off owning the means of production and controlling what they produce.

And yet Arian, like Bridges, also had to work with those capitalist employers while he was President of Local 13, where he “earned a grudging respect from management,” as the Journal put it. The Pacific Maritime Association’s Vince Maestra, who worked with Arian in Southern California, told the indus- try newspaper “He means what he says and says what he means – he’s a straight shot.” Other industry offici- als weren’t so generous and privately derided him as a dangerous commu- nist – the same label that had once been pinned on Harry Bridges.

An insurgent campaign

Arian gladly embraced the role of an insurgent. He pledged to shake things up and questioned the status quo – while pledging to maintain the ILWU’s best traditions of militancy and solidarity. His promise to make changes worried many union officials – and also...
longtime ILWU stewards who sought and received protection in case Arian won and wanted to “clean house” at the time. "I am confident that union members in San Francisco quickly formed staff unions and secured contracts signed by outgoing President Jimmy Herman. Beyond the headquarters, Arian tried to implement his programs in the face of growing resistance. In his next Dispatcher report, Arian showed more pragmatic side. His account of a recent AFL-CIO convention that he attended with other ILWU leaders included some well-deserved criticism of the body’s bureaucratic and undemocratic procedures, while also noting many of the resources, relationships and alliances that could benefit the ILWU.

Softer tone

In the coming months, Arian’s reports to the membership became softer and humbler, especially when it came to his ambitious organizing program that was frequently criticized by opponents.

“We don’t have all the answers at the international,” he said. “We don’t have any magic formula.”

Arian explained that the union had just finished a series of organizing conferences in each region, in order to gather ideas from members and officials and spark interest in organizing. He said the new effort would begin slowly.

“We are taking the first small steps in what will be a long process. We’ll make mistakes. We’ll try things that may or may not work. But we are determined that the organizing of new members into the ILWU will be the international’s top priority.”

Assessing jurisdiction isn’t enough

Arian emphasized that the organizing work could only succeed with enthusiastic support from local officials and members, adding that the traditional policy of “assessing jurisdiction” wasn’t enough to protect the union from a growing non-union workforce on the docks and throughout the logistics chain.

“For decades, we thought that our coastwise jurisdiction would insulate us from the transfer of work to low-wage, non-union environments. But the situation has changed,” he said. “Our right to strike has been systematically eroded. Our labor laws have been routinely violated.”

Organizing plan hits snags

The organizing program was hobbled from the beginning by disagreements about its cost and viability. In January of 1992, a scaled-down version of the program was rolled-out, with funds coming from voluntary contributions made by locals in each region to support organizers in their area — matched with funding from the International. Arian tried to put the best spin on the compromised program, but in the end, it never received the funding, staffing, or widespread support he hoped for — and the program required to make progress.

Challenges appear early

A host of other problems beset the new administration from the beginning, including a bitter dispute at Local 13’s Allied Division who learned just before Christmas of 1991 that their jobs were being terminated by Southern Pacific Railroad at the gateline LA-Long Beach Intermodal Container Transport Facility. Built in 1987 with $57 million in public funds and support from the ILWU, it was the nation’s largest off-dock rail operation. The company announced that they were dumping ILWU-represented workers was delivered with help from heavily-armed railroad police who carried sniper rifles and machine guns into the yard. Arian and others responded with an aggressive campaign that included rallies attended by thousands and efforts to coordinate stop-work meetings at California ports, but employers secured a federal court injunction that locked the port action. A valiant effort continued with picketing and leafletting, but eventually ended.

Fighting NAFTA

Another issue that Arian tackled was the NAFTA agreement initiated by George Bush, backed by corporate America and championed by Bill Clinton. Arian made the fight a priority and led a delegation to Mexico to observe elections and discuss NAFTA with local and national labor leaders. At home, the U.S. Presidential primary election left the ILWU with little choice but to endorse Bill Clinton, who was better known for being a lawyer and for Wall Street while largely ignoring the plight of workers and unions.

Successful longshore contract

Arian headed up the 1993 Longshore Contract negotiations, which he hoped could control over new technology, including computer work that was increasingly being done by non-union workers away from the docks. There was also a push to claim jurisdiction over new maintenance and repair work. Another goal was improving pension programs — including increases for pensioners. The contract was settled with modest but positive movement on technology and maintenance issues and modest wage increases – but dramatic pension increases. The contract called for boosting the benefits from $39 to $69 per month for each year of service for active members — an increase of more than 35%. The new contract also provided sizeable increases for pensioners. The union’s excellent health plan was also maintained without any cuts for active members or pensioners.

Bridges Institute

After the longshore contract settled the Harry Bridges Institute became the next controversy. The Institute had been Arian’s idea for an educational, cultural and research effort that would include community leaders and sympathetic faculty from universities who wanted to help the union. The effort won support from the Executive Board, but it was attacked by others for a variety of reasons and became a lighting rod for his adversaries.

Growing internal differences

Arian’s final months in office became more difficult as the internal political environment embroiled almost every issue in conflict. International solidarity visits were criticized as wasteful and excessive. A lengthy struggle at Peavy Grain in Bellingham, Wash., dragged-on without a resolution in sight. Divisions and rancor were already intense when International Vice President Brian McWilliams announced he would run against Arian.

Loss & graceful departure

McWilliams won the race in 1994 by almost 1500 votes. Arian retained support in much of Southern California, but lost in most other locations, including Hawaii, where McWilliams won by 200 votes.

After losing, Arian addressed members of the International Executive Board in a respectful and conciliatory tone: “I have always accepted the decisions of the membership. Even when I disagreed with them.” He also called on Dave Arian attacks on this leadership. What you’ll see is support for the Con- vention programs of organizing, interna- tionalism and member education.”

His last official duty as Interna- tional President was to administer the oath of office to his successor, Brian McWilliams, on July 30, 1994.

Back home to Pedro

Defeated but undaunted, Arian returned to San Pedro and went back to working on the docks. He put energy into his family, the Harry Bridges Insti- tute, and other educational projects.

Ten years after his 1994 defeat, Arian ran and was elected President of Local 13. He also returned to the Southern California District Council where he once again, became President of the coordinating body and helped guide political action and voter registration efforts, including an all-out push to recruit ILWU volunteers to work in Nevada for Obama in 2009. At home, Arian was constantly courting and supporting a slew of local progressive leaders to run for City Council, Mayor, County Supervisor, State Assembly, Senate, and Congress. He worked with his longtime friend and political comrade, Diane Midleton, to help run...
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a foundation that made grants to union and community organizing projects.

Harbor Commissioner

In 2006, Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa appointed Arian to serve on an air pollution advisory board, a position which led to his 2010 appointment as Harbor Commissioner. When Mayor Eric Garcetti took office four years later, he replaced all the Commissioners except Arian – making him one of the Port’s longest-serving and best-informed representatives.

Finding the right balance

Serving on the Port presented Arian with new challenges and opportunities. He worked hard to address the needs of port workers and nearby residents – while recognizing the need to keep the port healthy. The biggest and most difficult issue Arian faced on the Commission was how to manage the Port’s long-term competitive edge – which included the inevitable adoption of new technology – while also meeting the needs of workers and the community.

Taking a more active role

“It’s all about thru-put and efficiency in handling containers,” Arian would say, outlining his vision that balanced the needs of industry and workers. He argued that a large, trained workforce was an asset to the Port – and one that should be backed by strategic and prudent infrastructure investments. He believed this combination could keep the Port efficient and increase volumes – which in turn would generate revenues for the Port and jobs for workers. Under his nine years of leadership, Arian encouraged and supported them at critical times, beginning decades ago when they first ran for office. Internationally Vice President Bobby Olvera, lathe, who both credit Arian with providing him with immense comfort and meaning throughout his life – especially during his final months and days – Arian’s legacy includes many enduring contributions to the ILWU.

Mentoring new leaders

Arian was a mentor and trainer of past, present and future ILWU leaders. The number he influenced amounts to dozens if not hundreds, and includes International President Willie Adams, and former Vice President Ray Familte, who both credit Arian with encouraging and supporting them at critical times, beginning decades ago when they first ran for office. International Vice President Bobby Olivera, Jr., also credits Arian for helping him grow as a leader, as does longtime former Coast Committeemen Ray Ordez, Jr. Local 142’s Donna Domingo says she benefited from Arian’s help. Former Local 13 leader Greg Mitre, who now presides over the Pacific Coast Pensioners Association, and his brother, former Local 13 President Mike Mitre who recently passed, were both helped by Arian. Others include Southern California District Council President Cindy Familte, Local 26 President Lusia Gratz, Long Beach Community College Board member Vivian Malanu, Local 13 leaders Sunshine Garcia and Shannon Ross, Local 13 Secretary Irene Huerta, Local 65 Port Police officer Glen Twardy and Longshore Education Committee Chair Patricia Aguirre. Local 13 President Mark Mendoza and Vice President Gary Herrera were also encouraged by Arian. Former International President Bob McElrath served his first term as Coast Committeeeman because Arian appointed him to the post. Former International President Jen Spinosa says he benefited enormously from Arian, beginning in 1969 when both worked as terminal warehousemen. Arian continued impacting the lives of new activists such as Anthony Loy up to his final day.

“Dave has been mentoring me since I was a casual for the past 7 years,” said Loy who is now an ID Casual. “He helped me study every contract since 1934 and we talked about lots of history. I’ve volunteered for the Labor Day Parade, Feed the Community Day, phone banked for ballot measures and politicians who support our union, and now I’m working on a video project at the Harry Bridges Institute called Great Unions Make Great Families.”

Legacy of radical politics

Arian’s embrace of a radical political vision, combined with his ability to take pragmatic steps that helped the ILWU and labor movement endure, places Arian in the company of Harry Bridges and other radicals from the “Old Left” generation who built the ILWU on a foundation of internal democracy, militancy and vision of a better world. Like Arian, they believed workers should have power on the job and a democratic say in economic decisions.

Faith in education

Arian’s commitment to developing new leaders was closely tied to his belief that education can inspire a sense of solidarity, hope and forward within the ranks of the working class. The man who once read 50 books a year and became a working-class intellectual, believed in the power of ideas and shared experience among co-workers. That vision was behind the Communication Century, the Harry Bridges Institute, his support for trade schools and apprenticeship programs – all part of his faith in rank-and-file education and training to help ILWU members learn about history, leadership skills and political theory.

Organizing until the end

It’s no accident that Arian’s final months looked and felt more like a successful organizing campaign than a vigil. His team produced communications that informed the community, provided opportunities for everyone to get involved, and created emotional links that made people feel connected to a man who touched so many in the working class.

Celebrating Arian’s life

Local 13’s massive new dispatch hall was filled to capacity on Sunday, January 27, for a celebration of Dave Arian’s life that was staggering in both numbers and diversity. Hundreds of rank-and-file members filled seats on the floor and bleachers in the back, while others stood at the sides wearing safety vests because they were taking a break from work. Outside on the docks, giant cranes up and down the coast stood in the “full-up” position, in honor of the former President.

A total of 26 speakers began with Arian’s “best friend,” Norm Tuck. Each speaker told brief but touching stories about Arian’s impact on their lives. Music by John Tou Lance and Rocky Q with along with Felipe Rodriguez and Zeek Green added to the remarks, as did short videos of Dave Arian telling stories about his life. International President Willie Adams and former President Jim Spinosa both spoke on stage, and were supported in the audience by former President Bob McElrath, current Hawaii Vice President Wesley Furtado, and all the ILWU International officers including Vice President Bobby Olivera Jr., Secretary-Treasurer Ed Ferris, and Coast Committeeen Cam Williams and Frank Ponce De Leon. Members and officers from locals up and down the coast also attended, as did a delegation of Austra-
R

ong Magden, labor historian, teacher, and beloved mem-
ber of the ILWU family, passed away on December 31 at
the age of 92. Magden is known for his research and writings on
longshore workers in the Pacific Northwest. During his decades of research on the working wa-
terfront, Magden forged close ties with ILWU members up and
don the coast—but especially in Northwest locals where he was
affectionately known as “Dr. Ron” and held an honorary membership
in the Local 23 Pensioners Club.

He will be remembered for his scholarship on the Pacific Northwest’s
working waterfront, his efforts to help document and preserve the history
and stories of longshore workers, his significant contributions to the archive
collections at the University of Wash-
ington and his role in establishing the
UW’s Harry Bridges Center for Labor
Studies. To the ILWU members who
knew him well, he is remembered as a
friend, colleague, mentor and master
story teller whose influence spanned
across several generations of long-
shore workers.

Magden grew up in a working-class household in Idaho. He loved history
at and an early age and remembered teaching history to his classmates in
third grade. It was at his mother’s insis-
tence that Magden went to college. Ron had planned to get a job after gradu-
ating high school to help support his mother, but she wanted him to study.
He began teaching in 1964. Magden began teaching at Tacoma Community College just after
it opened and kept teaching there for
next 35 years.

In 1982, he co-authored a book, The Working Waterfront: The Story of

A memorial was held to honor Mag-
den on January 15, at the Foss Water-
way Seaport museum in Tacoma. The
event attracted hundreds and the loca-
tion was fitting. The museum houses
exhibits on Tacoma’s maritime history and Magden played an important role in
helping to create the museum. Attend-
ees included ILWU International Presi-
dent Willie Adams, ILWU Vice Presi-
dent Bobby Olvera Jr., IUB Secretary
Treasurer Terri Mast, Local 23 Presi-
dent Dean McGrath, Local 19 President
Rich Austin Jr., IUB Region 37 Regional
Director Richard Gurria, ILWU Puget
Sound District Council President Dan
McKisson and ILWU International Pres-
ident Emeritus Bob McEllrath.

Mike Jagielski, President of the
Tacoma Pensioners and friend of Mag-
den, served as the Master of Ceremo-
nies. After delivering a heartfelt eulogy,
Jagielski invited friends and family
to share their remembrances. Jagiel-
ski recalled Ron’s positive nature and
how every time he spoke to him on the
phone, “Ron would spend the first few
minutes with praise to lift my spirits.
He never had a bad word to say about
anyone,” Jagielski added. “and no one
ever said a bad word about Ron.”

Michael Honey, history professor
at the University of Washington, called
Magden a “people’s historian” because
he told history from the point of view
of the working class and because he
pretted the company in the ILWU
hiring hall over the halls of academia.

Ron remained active on several
ILWU related projects until his death.
He was a fixture at Pacific Coast Pen-
sioner conventions, using them as an
opportunity to meet pensioners and
record oral histories. Magden under-
took the project with ILWU historian
Harvey Schwartz and labor archivist
Conor Casey from the University of
Washington. Magden also regularly
attended pensioner club meetings at
Locals 19 and 23, where he worked
closely with Local 23’s Young Workers’
Committee along with other members
of the Pensioners Club on a weekly
basis. Magden was also nearing com-
pletion on a history ILWU Local 19.

Ron went out on his shield, juggling multiple projects and work-
ning with the Local 23 Young Work-
ers’ Committee right up until the very
end,” said Schwartz. “That speaks to his
character and his love for the ILWU.
You really wouldn’t have expected
anything less from Ron.”

ILWU members help LA Teachers win strike to improve public schools

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with donations from Locals 13 and 63.
Teachers and ILWU members stood
together on those picket lines during
heavy rains that fell during much of
the strike. Members dug into their own
pockets to donate food, ponchos and
other items to help the striking teachers.

After six days of striking, the United Teachers Union reached a ten-

ative agreement with School District
Officials and quickly ratified the new
contract on Tuesday, January 22 by an
overwhelming margin.

Solidarity works

The was the first teachers strike in
30 years, so most participants had no
experience on a picket line, and weren’t
sure how to organize community sup-
port. Because the SCDC has done this
many times in past, they reached out
to involve other unions in the Harbor
Coalition and partnered with commu-
nity groups such as LAANE, which pro-
vided staff Albert Ramirez to work
with SCDC in the Harbor Area. Other
groups included Reclaim Our Schools,
A Needy Wilmington and South Bay
Community Coalition/Thrive LA.
These groups have partnered with
SCDC in the past and joined this effort.

Many UTLA members expressed
their gratitude to the ILWU by post-

ing their feelings of solidarity on social
media.

ULTA member Michael Gearn,
who teaches at the Harry Bridges Span
School, said, “Thank you SO, SO much
for everything you did during the
strike. The ILWU kept us afloat.”

He went on to say, “We were honestly just
hitting our stride. I realized that the
strike is only partly about the contract.
I learned how valuable an opportunity
it was to do community organizing and
coalition building with other unions.”

Lisette Rodriguez, a California Fac-
ulty Association member at Cal State
Dominquez Hills said, “You all have
done an amazing job of supporting our
teachers and families! Thank you for
inviting me to adopt a school, I had a
great experience and I’ve made friend-
ships that will continue to grow.”

When Monica Rodriguez heard a
tentative agreement had been reached,
she wrote, “Thank the Lord, educators,
counselors, nurses, students, parents,
ILWU members and our community
who stood together and supported
each other. I am beyond blessed and
thankful as a parent of two LAUSD
students, a wife of an ILWU Local 13
member and a community volunteer.”

As an ILWU member and Presi-
dent of the SCDC, I want to thank all
our officers, members, and community
groups who stepped up to support our
teachers and students. In addition, I
want to thank Shannon Ross, wife of
ILWU Local 94 member, Marcel Ross.
She coordinated the collection and dis-
tribution of food to help the 80% of
students in LA schools who are low-
income and depend on food provided
at schools. Thanks to Shannon and
other volunteers, many of these chil-
dren in the Harbor Are were fed during
the strike.

It wasn’t hard for us to support this
teacher’s strike and struggle. This is
what we do—we help other unions and
union members. Second, this is not
the first time and it won’t be the last
time that we come together to support
our working families in our commu-
nity. And finally, defending our public
schools is one of the most sacred and
important things we can do as union
members and citizens. Thank you
everyone for all that you did to help
AN INJURY TO ONE IS AN INJURY TO ALL.

Cathy Famlathie
SCDC President
ILWU Local 63
Dave Arian: former ILWU President and Port Commissioner had radical roots

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lians led by Paddy Crumlin, President of both the International Transport Workers Federation and the CFMMEU union from down under. Political leaders included members of Congress, state legislators, and a slew of city and County officials led by Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti, Supervisor Janice Hahn and State Senator Alex Padilla. Longshoreman Paddy Crumlin, President of both the International Transport Workers Federation and the CFMMEU union from down under, political leaders included members of Congress, state legislators, and a slew of city and county officials led by Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti, Supervisor Janice Hahn and State Senator Alex Padilla. Longshoreman Paddy Crumlin praised Arian's abilities and the section concluded with an overview by Arian's longtime friend and comrade Diane Middleton. The event was skillfully emceed by Los Angeles City Councilmember Mike Bonin, who is married to Sean Arian.

“We all owe Dave an enormous debt of gratitude,” said President Willie Adams. “Dave was a working class hero who's legacy will live on forever. Rest in peace, brother Arian.”

Arian is survived by his son Sean and husband Mike Bonin of Los Angeles, and their son Jacob, his daughter Justine Arian-Edwards and husband Ethan of Huntington Beach, and their children, Jadyn, Destan, Aneka and Keira; his sister, Laraine Arian, of San Pedro; his ex-wife and close friend, Roxanne Arian of San Pedro; and dozens of nieces, nephews, cousins, in-laws, and their son Jacob; his daughter Justine Arian-Edwards and husband Ethan of Huntington Beach, and their children, Jadyn, Destan, Aneka and Keira; his sister, Laraine Arian, of San Pedro; his ex-wife and close friend, Roxanne Arian of San Pedro; and dozens of nieces, nephews, cousins, in-

DECEASED PENSIONERS:

Local 4: Jimmie L. Rickey (Nellie Ann); Kenneth D. Karschney (Linda); Local 8: James W. Montgomery; Joe J. Willius; Edward H. Johnston; Local 13: Marjion Anich; Tony P. Apodaca; Dennis Fritzpatrick; Stanley Smith; John A. Mahon; Emilio V. Acosta; John T. Ledonne; Local 19: Gerald Bowers; Joe Yasuda; Stanley C. Porter; Local 34: Albert Nealey; Desmond J. Oggle; Local 52: Samuel Rosenberg; Local 63: Helen M. Sloan; Keith J. Clibrurn; Local 91: Sam H. Allie; Local 98: Edward G. Kampanos

DECEASED SURVIVORS:

Local 4: Virginia M. Benson; Local 10: Arkadelphia Cherry; Ethel J. Rampona; Murle Jimmerson; Local 13: Eartha Slater; Madalena M. Branning; Marcella M. Karmelitch; Mary F. Robinson; Linda L. Bachelier; Jean Qualifies; Socorro Castro; Local 19: Marian Summers; Local 23: Violette Reppelle; Local 26: Beverly Rodriguez; Local 50: Yvonne Weygandt; Local 54: Sakhanhonne Bono; Local 63: Evelyn Tietzort; Local 98: Dorris A. Hansen;