



# THE DISPATCHER

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Port of Hueneme community celebrates life of Warren Shelton [page 6](#)



Elected delegates from 29 West Coast ports met to discuss the priorities in the upcoming negotiations for a new Longshore & Clerks Contract. (Top row, left to right): ILWU International President Willie Adams, ILWU International Vice President (Mainland) Bobby Olvera, Jr; (Bottom row, left to right): Coast Committeeman Frank Ponce De Leon, Coast Committeeman Cam Williams.

## Unity and strength at the Longshore Division Contract Caucus

Close to 100 delegates from 29 West Coast ports from San Diego, CA, to Bellingham, WA, who were elected by members of the ILWU's Longshore Division, met in Long Beach, CA from January 31-February 11 to debate and adopt the priorities for a new Longshore & Clerks Contract. The current contract expires on July 1, 2022. The in-person meeting followed strict COVID protocols to protect delegates, guests, and staff. Masks were required at all times indoors, and everyone who attended the caucus was required to pass a daily COVID test.

In keeping with COVID safety protocols and local regulations regarding indoor meeting size, only a small number of fraternal delegates and guests were allowed to attend. Among the guests were ILWU President Emeritus James Spinoza and ILWU President Emeritus Robert McEllrath.

### Dedications

The caucus was dedicated to the memories of those who recently passed. Delegates took to the mic to read into the record the names of members and pensioners whom we have lost throughout the pandemic. The recent, sudden passing of Local 46 President Warren Shelton, who was a caucus delegate, hit particularly hard. A memorial wreath with his photo and caucus credentials was placed in the meeting hall for the duration of the caucus.

### Guest speakers

On the first day of the caucus, Long Beach Mayor Robert Garcia, PhD, welcomed the delegates and thanked the ILWU for their work moving cargo through the ports.

"I want to thank you for moving the regional economy of California. When people look at everything in their homes, when they're thinking and talking about the supply chain, the most important part of that supply chain is the people," Mayor

Garcia said. "It's the people that are actually moving the cargo. When you talk about investing in infrastructure, there's no better investment than investing in people."

Mayor Garcia was followed by Mario Cordero, Executive Director of the Port of Long Beach, and Gene Seroka, Executive Director of the Port of Los Angeles. Director Seroka recognized the hard work, sacrifice, and heroism of ILWU members for moving cargo at record levels throughout the pandemic.

Director Cordero said the pandemic-induced supply chain crisis provides an opportunity for transformational change by moving to a 24/7 supply chain model. Cordero thanked the ILWU, which has long supported 24/7 gates for decades, and said that it was time for the rest of the supply chain to follow this lead.

"It may not happen tomorrow, but at some point, it needs to happen," Cordero said.

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# The legacy of Local 23 longshore workers Ernie and Jack Tanner

In recognition of Black History Month, ILWU Local 23 would like to honor the proud history and traditions of African-American longshore workers on the Tacoma waterfront. In particular, this year we want to celebrate the lives of Ernie Tanner and Jack Tanner.

Ernest C Tanner was born in 1889 and moved to Tacoma with his family in 1900. Celebrated as one of the finest athletes ever in state history, Tanner excelled in track, basketball, baseball, and football at what's now Stadium High School. Known as Washington's "Black Jim Thorpe," he played quarterback for Whitworth College from 1908-09 and managed Tacoma's Negro League baseball club, the Little Giants, from 1912-23.

Tanner came to the waterfront after the 1916 strike and joined the old Tacoma longshore union on

December 26, 1918, at a time when most unions were segregated or outright exclusionary. From the beginning, Tanner insisted that Black longshore workers enjoy the same wages and working conditions as white workers and established a reputation as an excellent winch driver and union man.

During the 1934 West Coast Waterfront Strike, Tanner was the sole Black member of the Northwest Joint Strike Committee, working closely with San Francisco strike leader Harry Bridges to maintain Black and white unity during the 82-day strike. A constant champion for equality, integration, democracy and the worker-controlled hiring hall — the central demand of the '34 strike — when asked if he would ever work out of an employer-controlled hall again, Tanner flatly replied, "No, I would quit the waterfront first."

In 1936 he was elected chair of the local's Publicity Committee

and also served on the Executive Board as a Trustee from 1933-39 and 1948-53. When the ILWU was formed in 1937, Tacoma was one of the few holdouts to stay with the old union. Tanner was an early and stalwart advocate for affiliating with the new union. ILWU President Bridges made regular trips to Tacoma over the years to try and win the local over, often staying with the Tanner family while in town.

Ernie's son Jack Tanner followed his dad to the waterfront and joined the union on May 19, 1942. After a break to serve in World War II with the US Army, Jack returned to work as a longshoreman while finishing law school at the University of Puget Sound and later the University of Washington. As a student he joined the NAACP, serving as the civil rights organization's regional director from 1957-65. In 1966, Jack became the first Black candidate for governor in Washington state and was later

appointed the first Black federal judge in the Pacific Northwest in 1978.

Ernie Tanner passed away in 1956. Two years later, Tacoma finally reunited with the rest of the coast, receiving a new charter as ILWU Local 23 on January 7, 1958. Jack Tanner died in 2006 while still serving on the bench as a senior court judge.

Our union is eternally grateful to these early pioneers for labor and civil rights, who fought not just for longshore workers and their families, but for all working people. Then and now, unions remain a key source of strength for racial justice and a powerful tool toward Black self-determination and political struggle. But our work is far from over. As it's been said before, "freedom is a constant struggle." Celebrate Black workers' history and keep fighting. "An injury to one is an injury to all."

— Jared Faker, Local 23 President  
and Zack Patten

## Former ILWU Local 52 member Max Vekich sworn in as Federal Maritime Commissioner

Max Vekich, a retired member of ILWU Local 52, was sworn in during a virtual ceremony as the fifth member of the Federal Maritime Commission (FMC) on February 15. He was confirmed by the U.S. Senate by a 51-43 vote on February 10. Commissioner Vekich was first appointed to fill the vacancy on the FMC by President Joe Biden in June of 2021.

The FMC is an independent federal agency responsible for regulat-

ing agreements between American exporters and the shipping companies that carry their goods to ensure they are fair and competitive.

### Decades of experience

Commissioner Vekich brings more than four decades of experience as a longshore worker in Grays Harbor and Seattle. He also served as President of ILWU Locals 24 and 52, has served on the ILWU's International Executive Board, and was the Chair of the Coast Longshore Legislative Committee. His long career in the maritime industry has given him first-hand knowledge and experience about the challenges faced by

the maritime and intermodal transportation system. Vekich also served four consecutive terms in Washington State's House of Representatives from 1983-1991, where was the Chair of three committees: Agriculture, Trade & Economic Development, and Commerce & Labor.

"Max Vekich is the FMC Commissioner that America needs right now. Our ports are a critical part of our nation's infrastructure and economy, and Mr. Vekich solves problems with domestic benefit in mind," said ILWU International President Willie Adams. "He has the right

*continued on page 7*



Photo by Ali Vekich

Max Vekich (left) was sworn in as the new Federal Maritime Commissioner on February 15th in a virtual ceremony attended by his wife (right) Marcee Stone-Vekich.

## ILWU in solidarity with Ukraine will not handle Russian Cargo at U.S. West Coast ports

The ILWU announced in a March 3rd press release that ILWU members would not handle Russian cargo as an act of solidarity with the people of Ukraine. The release stated:

"Russia's large-scale invasion of Ukraine is an act of aggression that endangers a population of more than 40 million people, including millions of innocent men, women, and children. Accordingly, effective immediately, the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU), some 20,000 workers strong in 29 ports up and down the United States West Coast, will refuse to load or unload any Russian vessels or Russian cargo coming into or going out of all West Coast ports from Bellingham, Washington to San Diego, California.

'With this action in solidarity with the people of Ukraine, we send a strong message that we unequivocally condemn the Russian invasion,' said ILWU International President Willie Adams.

'West Coast dockworkers are proud to do our part to join with those around the world who are bravely taking a stand and making sacrifices for the good of Ukraine.'"



**Passing of an icon:** We were saddened to learn of the passing Local 23 pensioner and icon Jim Norton. Jim was a mentor to generations of ILWU members including ILWU International President Willie Adams and the Local 23 Young Workers Committee. Local 23 members and pensioners are currently writing a eulogy Jim that the Dispatcher will publish as soon as it is completed.

## DISPATCHER

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# Longshore workers, Oakland Educators rally to save port jobs, public schools

Local 10 members joined with educators and students at Oscar Grant Plaza outside of Oakland City Hall on February 17th for a rally to protect the Port of Oakland’s Howard Terminal from billionaire Oakland A’s owner John Fisher’s proposed baseball stadium and condominium development project.

## Privatization threatens schools

Several hundred people attended the noon rally, where voices were also raised to protest the planned closure of several public schools in the Oakland Unified School District. Speakers at the rally pledged solidarity between the two struggles, and dozens of protesters held signs reading “Stop privatizing our schools, our port.”

In addition to owning the Oakland A’s, John Fisher is a leader in the effort to privatize public schools. He is on the Board of Directors of KIPP schools, which runs charter schools across the country. This network has 17 charter schools in Northern California, including one in West Oakland and another in downtown Oakland.

## Protecting Oakland workers

Activists said that school privatization and the proposal to develop industrial port land for million-dollar condos and a ballpark is a dual attack on Oakland workers. They say these efforts will accelerate gentrification by displacing long-term Black and Brown residents of West Oakland, destroying well-paying blue-collar jobs at the Port that have provided a middle class living to generations of Black families (Local 10 is 73% African American), and closing schools that serve working-class students in Oakland.

## Fight against gentrification

“John Fisher wants to move us out and move his millionaire friends in,” said Local 10 member Trent Willis.

“There’s a word for that — gentrification. As members of the ILWU, we stand against privatization and gentrification because those two things widen the wealth gap. There’s an attack in this country on the middle class. That attack is coming from these billionaires who think they can just come to your city, take your land, take your jobs, take your money, and go live high up on the hill somewhere. We don’t put up with that.”

Willis was one of several ILWU members who spoke at the rally. Other speakers included residents of West Oakland, Oakland teachers, and students.

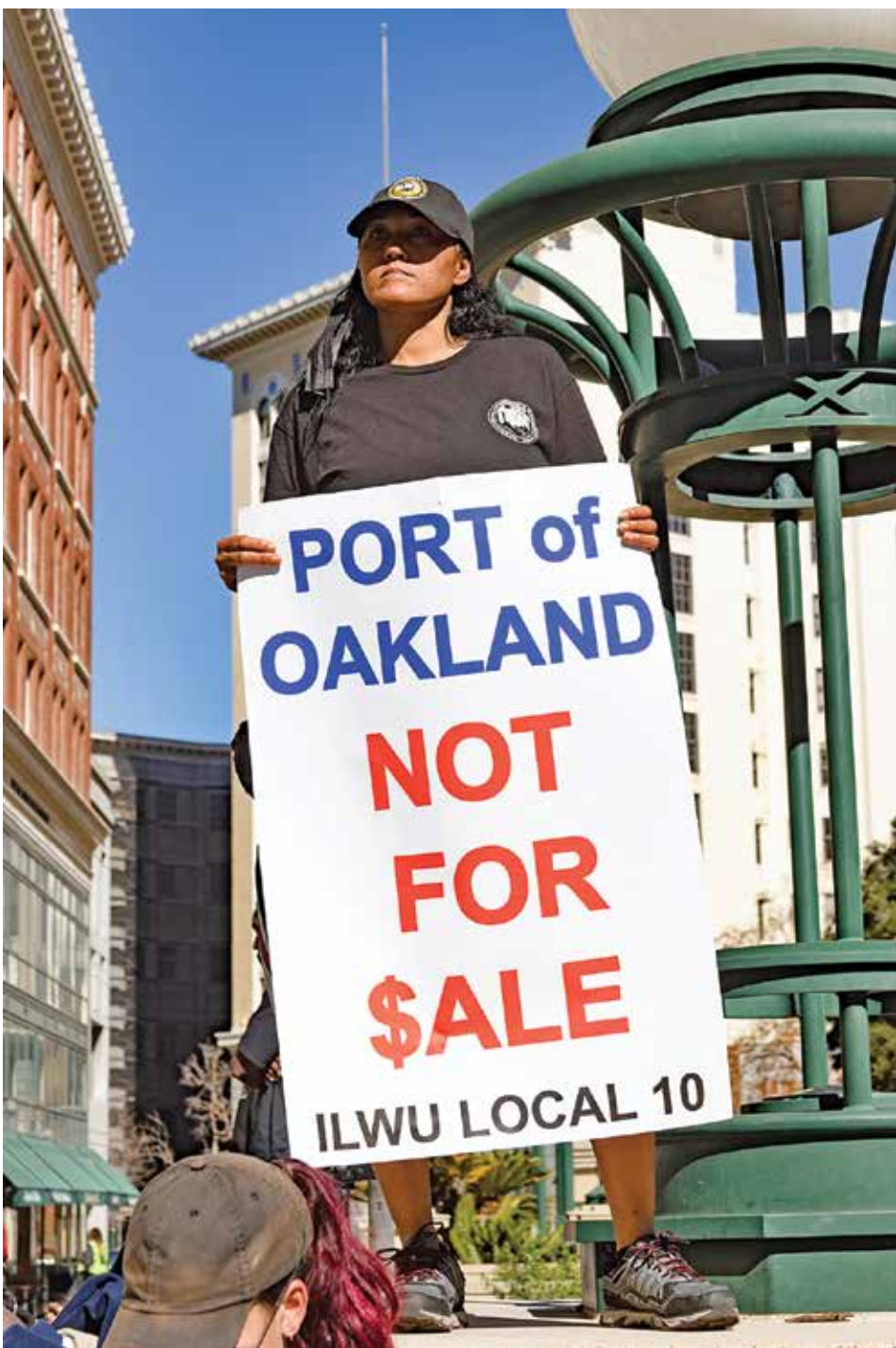
Local 10 member Aaron Wright said that it was outrageous that the City wanted to give more than \$1 billion in taxpayer money to Fisher’s development project while shutting down public schools because of a lack of funds. Wright also said that the Howard Terminal development poses a serious threat to port operations and would jeopardize the 84,000 regional jobs generated by the Port of Oakland.

“Howard Terminal is important because it is a nexus of truck traffic, a nexus of ship traffic, a nexus of train traffic,” Wright said.

## Cautionary tale

ILWU International Secretary-Treasurer Ed Ferris said the attempt to de-industrialize the port could have a devastating impact on the economy of Oakland.

“We need to pay attention to what’s going on here, because I see a lot of parallels to what I saw in my hometown of Pittsburgh, PA,” Ferris said. “In the 1970’s, there were a lot of great union jobs that allowed working class families to live in dignity. Unfortunately, those jobs went away. And it’s all because of corporate greed, corporate profits. They like to blame the worker instead of who’s really at fault — and that’s the elite class. Trickle-down economics doesn’t work.”



Longshore workers and Oakland educators banded together to stand up of the Port of Oakland and public education.



ILWU International Secretary-Treasurer Ed Ferris said the deindustrialization of his home town of Pittsburgh should serve a cautionary tale for Oakland about the negative effect of destroying good, blue collar jobs.



Local 10 member Trent Willis rallied the crowd and said the development project by billionaire John Fisher would negatively impact Black workers by forcing out long-term residents of West Oakland and endanger jobs at the Port of Oakland

## EIR approved

The rally was scheduled hours before the Oakland City Council met to consider the final Environmental Impact Report for the proposed project. Councilmembers voted 6-2 in favor of certification. This is just one of many steps before the Council can approve a binding agreement between the city and the A’s for the project. Councilmembers Noel Gallo and Carroll Fife opposed the certification. Howard Terminal is located in Councilmember Fife’s district.

## Long fight ahead

Kitty Kelly-Epstein, a professor, writer, and activist spoke at the rally and said that she was hopeful that the project would eventually be stopped along with the planned closure of Oakland schools.

“The people of Oakland already know that these things are wrong,” she said. “Nobody wants to pay money to a billionaire. Nobody wants our schools closed. Nobody wants our port wrecked. The moral authority of this city has always rested with educators and longshore workers. We are the people who speak for justice. And we’ve been doing this for years.”



# Black History 2022

# We are the ILWU



## Pedro de Sa Local 6 Business Agent

*I joined Local 6 in 2005 out of the hiring hall. I was going to community college and working part-time but wasn't getting enough hours to pay the bills. I had a friend who was working at Guittard Chocolate and they told me to go to the hiring hall. After hopping through a few jobs, I ended up getting a full-time job at Gallo Sales, a wine warehouse. I worked there for 14 years until I was elected as Business Agent.*

*I was politically active in college where we did union solidarity work, so it was a natural transition to be active in the union. It also quickly became clear to me that if we weren't active, the company would walk all over us.*

*Our union runs on member participation. We have the ability to impact our working conditions and to hold those that we elect accountable. I really like the democratic nature and traditions of the ILWU – a union by members for members. Even when I was in a minority position, I felt like my voice mattered and that I could try to change things by raising my concerns and opinions.*

*Recently, I helped Local 6 members settle a contract that was over a year and a half expired in a hard negotiation. Being able to directly create positive changes in people's lives is the best thing about being a union activist.*



## Tamiko Love Southern California Alcohol/ Drug Recovery Program Dir./Rep.

**As a young adult, I developed a passion for serving people by being a part of a helping profession.** By volunteering at my church, community food banks, and the local Boys and Girls Club, I learned the importance of offering the support needed to individuals and families, especially those in difficult situations. My contact with social workers, community advocates, and teachers inspired me.

*I went on to pursue a college education in Social Work. After working in the profession for a few years, I obtained my Master's in Social Work and later became a mental health professional (LCSW), licensed in California.*

*In 1997, I stumbled upon what I now know to be a blessing, the ILWU. In January 1998, I picked up my first job at the casual hall. I recall feeling overwhelmed with fear of not knowing what to expect. The connectedness with other casuals helped alleviate some of my fears so that I would make it through the night of driving a UTR. Although I left that shift feeling discouraged about my abilities to be a longshore worker, I continued to go back to the casual hall because giving up or quitting was not my character.*

*Holding tight to my plan A, the passion for helping people, longshore work was always my plan B. That is until I was appointed to the Alcohol Drug and Recovery Program Representative position for the ILWU-PMA Health Benefits in April of 2016.*

*My platform is that representation matters. When the ILWU members or their dependents reach out to my office for help, I want them to feel respected, accepted, heard, safe, and loved.*

*While I may not fully know the individual's struggles that seek help for substance use disorder and recovery, I have experienced trauma and watched family members suffer from the disease.*

*These traumatic experiences caused me to work hard in obtaining the education, work experience, and skill set needed to make a difference.*

*Having the ability to network, seek out resources relevant to the needs of what people are lacking, and advocate for people who otherwise wouldn't be able to do so for themselves, I feel, makes a dif-*



## Adrian Lowrey Local 91 President/ Business Agent

*In 1997 I was working for the U.S. Post Office and I was told by a friend about hiring and I went down and got in line like everybody else. I was fortunate enough to be one of the people selected. The job was perfect for me. It was outdoors and hands-on. I'm a physical type of person. So, it was just right for me.*

*This is a job that everyone would like to have. You have your freedom. People go to school for years to get a job that pays what this does. You can work a little or you can work a lot. We have so many different kinds of jobs in longshore, there's something for everybody. Everybody isn't a physical person like me that likes to get up on the ship and throw iron. They can go take a clerk job, take a dock job, you know, do a little cone. There's something for everybody.*

*I have always been an active member. Shortly after I got registered, we were locked out by the employer in 2002. My activism started on the picket line. We were assigned different ports. We were standing up for jobs and showed up on the picket line.*

*My work ethic probably got me to Local 91. Every foreman job I was offered, I showed up. Some guys take a day off for the game, or special occasions, Mother's Day, whatever the occasion was. I showed up for years. I missed all the games or boxing nights or whatever. My wife would be at home, either recording it or texting me the scores. I missed a lot during those years. But I'm here now.*

*The rank-and-file kind of pushed me to run for office. I started on the Labor Relations Committee (LRC) and the Board of Trustees and learned a lot about the union. Now I am President/BA of Local 91 and the backup Dispatcher. I encourage members to step up and be a part of the framework because the union doesn't run itself. The old-timers are getting ready to retire, so we're the old-timers now.*

*I've just always been a rank-and-file type of guy. You know, I love my job. I love the waterfront. And I always press the guys, you know, do the right thing so we can hold on to this and move forward.*





ference. My vision is big, so as I continue in the position of the ADRP Representative, I hope to include other pertinent health and wellness resources that will help our union members.

Being a woman of color, I was able to work my way up the ranks from a casual to an identified class B and A while having a voice in an industry that was predominantly male. Over the years, I learned to acclimate to working on the docks. I came to understand the waterfront's duties, equipment, and culture. Being a part of the ILWU, one of the most vital unions, has been rewarding. I attribute some of my successes to being employed in a union job that has allowed me the opportunity to achieve my goals.

My idea of success is looking at where we are today and preparing for tomorrow. I desire individuals and family systems to become well and thrive. As we all know..."An injury to one is an injury to all," and this includes the whole family and the communities we live in.

## Jerome Johnson Local 19

**My father was a supervisor for Matson when he passed away. I was the youngest of seven kids and was selected by my mom to be the one to inherit his book. He passed in December of 1992 and I went through the process and was ready to go to work in March of 1993. At the time, I was going to school up in Bellingham, WA, so my first longshore job was on the docks in Bellingham.**



I look at the ILWU as the big brother of society. We are going to be the ones to do the right thing. We are going to be the ones to stand on the right side of the troubles. When there are societal problems, we will be the ones sticking up for the little guys and be the ones that people look to for support and most times we are there to lend that support. That's the one thing I have to say that I am proud of about this union.

I've always participated in the union I've been the night Business Agent for Local 19 for 11 or 12 years. I've been on the Executive Board. I was the Vice President at one point. I'm not one to be out there in front but I will do my part. Whether my part is to gather support or whether it's just to speak up on certain issues.

Be part of the solution. So many people have complaints, but they don't participate. They don't get involved. If you see a problem, be a part of the solution. Don't be that guy sitting in the back of the hall, talking to his buddies just complaining. Write up a petition, do something, bring it to the membership, and let the membership speak. You've got to be a part of the solution to solve them. That's how I found myself getting involved.

We can do our part to make the ILWU better than what it is. We are big, we're strong. As firm as we are, we could be a little bit tighter. That I think is it's just part of society. There's so much division within the world, the country and we see some of that in our union as well.



## Sgt. Joseph Artur Local 65 President

**After high school, I enlisted in the United States Marine Corps. I served four years on active duty and did two combat deployments in Iraq during Operation Iraqi Freedom. After my last tour, I still wanted to serve in some capacity. I wanted to settle down and stay close to home but still serve and give back to the community.**

I looked into several law enforcement agencies, Sherriff, LAPD, some federal jobs, customs, and the LA Port Police. I remember doing a ride-along with the Field Training Unit for the Port Police. I did ride-alongs on land and waterside. The Port Police are unique in that respect. We have 24/7 landside and maritime dedicated resources. I bonded well with the officers, during the ride-along when they explained what the specialized units, duties, responsibilities were and the additional responsibility they have ensuring the free flow of commerce within a port.

Fortunately, I applied and got accepted. I left the Marine Corps in May of 2007. I got hired with the Port Police in September of 2007 and went to the LAPD Police Academy. When I graduated in 2008, I went

into the Field Training Program. I was fortunate to work a variety of assignments, including patrol, maritime officer, and eventually, I was selected into a specialized K-9 unit and was assigned a K-9 explosive dog. I worked in that capacity for five years until I was promoted to sergeant and now, I am currently assigned to our Patrol Operations Division.

When it comes to the ILWU, I always wanted to learn about the history of the union and wanted to give back to the union. In 2018 I was nominated to be the Vice President of the local and served in that role from 2018 to 2020. In 2020 I was nominated to be the President and have been serving in that role since. I am the first African American President of the local. I didn't realize it until my colleagues and predecessor brought it to my attention.

As Port Police officers, we are familiar with the ILWU workforce on the docks. We want to be involved and participate and provide assistance and maintain 24/7 security operations just to make sure that dockworkers are safe are comfortable doing the job.

When I first joined the Port Police, I saw the strong support and partnership between Local 65 and the other ILWU locals at the Port. We've been involved in ILWU events and the other locals are involved in ours. We participate in the Bloody Thursday event every year and we have an annual Christmas party that is attended by other area ILWU locals. That's how I got to learn about the ILWU through seeing, participating, and involvement. We've always prided ourselves on being ILWU Port Police. We are all connected through the waterfront ecosystem. I have always wanted to maintain and build upon that partnership and that is one of the main reasons why I got drawn into serving the union.

## Lawrence Thibeaux, President, Bay Area Pensioners Club Vice President, Pacific Coast Pensioners Association

**I started working on the docks in 1967. I was unemployed and was sent to work on a banana boat. It wasn't a bad job. I heard that they were taking applications. I applied and was accepted as a B-person. I worked for about a year out of the Local 10 hall before I was trained on the lift and could work in gang.**



I was on a night gang for three years. I was also the steward in Gang 125 and went to Steward Council meetings where the officers would talk about arbitrations and the kind of issues in the contract that needed to be settled.

I became the Secretary of the Steward Council for a while, and then from there, I decided to run for Business Agent in 1970 right after I got my A book. I wasn't too successful with that. They said I was too young and didn't have enough experience with labor relations. So, I started taking labor study classes at San Francisco City College. And then I moved over to UC Berkeley's Labor Studies program.

The local had a problem with discrimination against African Americans trying to go into the foremen's union by the employers. I had just finished a class on discrimination in employment. So, the union put me on a project to find out how the employers were discriminating against Black workers. We discovered that the employers were hiring younger white workers and older Black workers. You had to be over 55 years of age if you were a Black worker to even be considered to be a foremen, but if you were white, you could become a foremen at 35. We took that information to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, and they had a 10-year restraining order against the employers on age discrimination.

From there, I became the weekend Business Agent for many years. And then I ran for Vice President of Local 10. Our President got into a bad accident, and I became the acting President while he was recuperating.

Now I am the President of the Bay Area Pensioners and also the Vice President of the Pacific Coast Pensioners Association. We say we're retired from the workforce, but we're not retired from the struggle. There are a lot of problems that happen to people as they get up in age. There's a need for someone to advocate for them. By being in the Pensioners Club, you hear about the kind of problems they're having with their pension or welfare, or just coping with life, and it gives you an opportunity to see what kind of things need to be changed when the contract comes up.



# Port of Hueneme community celebrates life of Warren Shelton

More than 300 ILWU members, pensioners, port community members, area elected officials, friends, and family members came out to a celebration of the life of Local 46 President Warren Shelton at the Port of Hueneme on February 15th. ILWU International President Willie Adams, ILWU International Vice President (Mainland) Bobby Olvera, Jr., and Coast Committeemen Frank Ponce De Leon and Cam Williams were among those who attended.

Kristin Decas, Port of Hueneme CEO and Director, served as the Master of Ceremonies.

Rick Valenzuela, who succeeded Warren as Local 46 President, opened the celebration with a prayer.



ILWU Local 46 President Rick Valenzuela delivered a prayer to open the celebration of Warren's life.

Mary Anne Rooney, President of the Port of Hueneme Board of Harbor Commissioners, presented Local 46 with a resolution honoring Local 46 members for their heroic efforts in working vessels around the clock, especially during the pandemic.

"Warren was a dedicated and hardworking man here at the port," Rooney said. "When we say we make cargo move, we couldn't have done that without Warren. We also recognize the ILWU leadership. Their efforts have been instrumental in the Port's growth and success as the sixth-largest container port on the West Coast, and the sixth-largest auto port in the United States."

Warren's wife, Kim Shelton, spoke on behalf of the family and imparted advice on being a good union member that would have made Warren proud.

"In memory of Warren, we ask that you learn the contract. He knew the contract by memory. So, I ask you to please learn your contract," Shelton said. "Work together as a team, both the union members and the employers, and work in good faith. Your word means something. If you don't know how to do something on the job, ask for help. Learn a new skill. Challenge yourself. Don't always take the easy job. Cover your jobs and do your best. Protect your jobs and your jurisdiction. Lastly, look out for your brothers and sisters and not just for yourself, because he truly believed in looking out for everybody."

Local 46 pensioner and Vice President of the Port of Hueneme Board of Harbor Commissioners, Jesse Herrera, recalled meeting Warren in 1986 when he was first registered and Herrera was the executive officer at Local 46.



Kim Shelton (right) spoke on behalf of the Shelton family with the support of her son, Tanner.

"From the beginning, Warren was ready to take on the employers, the leadership, and everyone else he could find," Herrera recalled. "Warren was what we used to call an all-around man. He could do any job from mechanic to marine clerk, supervisor, and everything in between."

Herrera encouraged everyone to carry forward Warren's legacy. "We should work together. We should cover each other. We should be good to each other. We should carry on that great spirit of the ILWU —of partnership and working together. Great leaders — and I considered Warren a great leader for the ILWU — want to make a difference. But not for themselves. They want to make a difference for the people that they represent, and I believe that was Warren. I hope that his legacy will forever be part of our foundation here at Local 46."

Coast Committeeman Frank Ponce De Leon recalled meeting Warren for the first time when Ponce De Leon was newly elected as Secretary-Treasurer of Local 13.

"Warren was always there to help you understand the things that you didn't. I told him he was like the Mayor of Hueneme. There was nothing he couldn't do. If you needed something, you could ask Warren. If he couldn't answer your question, he knew somebody else who could," Ponce De Leon said. "I relied on him heavily as a Coast Committeeman. Warren was not only a strong leader, but you could also rely on him to do what he was asked in difficult times."

After the formal speakers, there was an open mic to give people an opportunity to share their remembrances of Warren. Memorial t-shirts were sold with Warren's registration number. The proceeds from the shirts were donated to local charities that were important to Warren including Alex's Lemonade Stand.



Port Hueneme Harbor Commission Vice President and ILWU pensioner Jesse Herrera recalled his long history with Warren dating back to Warren's first days on the docks.



The ILWU is excited to announce the first annual Women, Trans, and Non-Binary Workers conference. Due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, this year's event will take place over Zoom.

The event is open to all ILWU members and affiliates in good standing—regardless of their gender identity—who want to learn more about the issues impacting our fellow women, trans, and non-binary members and want to learn more about how to encourage broader participation from everyone.

Those interested in attending may register by visiting the webpage below. You need only register once to attend all of the sessions.

Questions about the series may be directed to Robin Walker, Director of Educational Services at [robin.walker@ilwu.org](mailto:robin.walker@ilwu.org).

**REGISTER at [ILWU.org/education](https://ilwu.org/education)**

## Announcing the First Annual ILWU Women, Trans, and Non-Binary Workers Conference: Gender Equity is Labor Equity April 26 & 30, 2022

**Day 1: April 26**  
**6:00-8:00 PM Pacific Standard Time**

**Session #1, 6:00-7:00PM**

**Gender in the Workplace**

This panel discusses gender in the workplace and the ways ILWU leaders have encouraged participation from women, trans, and non-binary workers.

**Session #2, 7:00PM – 8:00 PM**

**Combatting Obstacles to Diverse Participation: the ILWU Canada Anti-Bullying Initiative**

ILWU Canada demonstrates their innovative program to make workplaces safer for all by combatting workplace bullying.

**Day 2: April 30**  
**Noon-2:00 PM Pacific Standard Time**

**Session #1, Noon – 1:00PM**

**Organizing the Untraditional**

A conversation with ILWU activists who have been involved in organizing across genders in the ILWU. How to we organize to achieve gender diversity in male-dominated industries? What is it like to organize in industries with traditionally non-male workforces?

**Session #2, 1:00 PM – 2:00 PM**

**Find Your Voice in Leadership**

ILWU Leaders Speak Out!  
A conversation with women, trans, and non-binary leaders in the ILWU on how they overcame obstacles and how they work to encourage others to take on leadership roles.

**REGISTER at [ILWU.org/education](https://ilwu.org/education)**



# Unity and strength at the Longshore Division Contract Caucus

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## Honoring Black history

In recognition of Black History Month, Local 10 delegate Trent Willis rose to recognize notable past and present Black ILWU members, including honorary members of the union.

He also thanked the body and the longshore locals for supporting Local 10's call in 2020 to celebrate June-teenth, a holiday commemorating the emancipation of African-American slaves in 1865.

"We all took our holiday on that day. That was a very great moment. That was historic. We all decided to lay down our tools in honor of brother George Floyd, and in honor of June-teenth," Willis said.

"I just wanted to also add that, as a Black man, I'm very proud to be a member of a union that is inclusive, that has always given me the right to stand before you and say exactly what I feel," said Willis. "Our union has come a long way. We've had our struggles. We've put tools in place to make us one of the most inclusive, and one of the most progressive unions in the world. I'm very proud to be a member of this organization. I wear my tags every day. And I'll go down fighting for this union."

Afterward, other delegates followed suit by honoring the important contributions made by African-American ILWU members to the history of the union. A few of the highlights among the dozens recognized included:

- Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., civil rights leader and honorary member of ILWU Local 10.
- Frank Jenkins, Jr., Local 19 LRC representative with a fellowship in his name at the University of Washington.

- George Cobbs, pioneer of the union's ADRP program to support recovery.
- Josh Williams, Captain of the award-winning ILWU Local 10 Drill Team.
- Gravett Brothers – Phil, Leon, Harry, Curtis and Willie, beloved members of Local 63.
- Venetta Hamlin, Local 10 member who's among the women who have "done everything a man can do on the waterfront."

Local 40 delegate and Caucus Chair George O'Neill acknowledged Eugene Manning, Billy Rhymes, Tony Douglas, Pat Miles, Bobby Barber and Verl Green, Jr and Sr, as some of his Black colleagues who helped O'Neill, who is white, enter the industry decades ago. "These guys would help you and teach you," said O'Neill. "But I don't think they always got the help they gave to me."

Melvin Mackay of Local 10 rose to acknowledge the fatal police shooting of aspiring Black musician Amir Locke during a no-knock warrant at Locke's home in Minnesota, as a sign that the national problem of racism is persistent and devastating. "It's always, 'you're guilty until proven innocent,'" said Mackay.

Local 13 President Ramon Ponce de Leon rose to recognize President Willie Adams, the first Black ILWU International President, to which delegates rose to their feet in a standing ovation.

## Democratic debate

The caucus process is a part of the union's democratic tradition. It is led by delegates representing each West Coast port who were elected by rank-and-file members of the ILWU's



*Members of Locals 13, 63 and 94 worked as monitors during the Caucus to ensure that only those who passed their daily COVID test entered the meeting.*

Coast Longshore Division. Throughout the two-week caucus, resolutions that originated from the Longshore Division locals containing ideas, suggestions and priorities for the new contract were brought forward for debate and discussion. One by one, the resolutions were carefully discussed and were passed, defeated, tabled, amended combined, or withdrawn.

## Safety, wages, benefits, jurisdiction & technology

The resolutions for the upcoming contract generally revolved around five issues: safety, wages, benefits, jurisdiction, and technology. Reports from Committees covering benefits, technology, legislative, and provided delegates with further details and analysis to inform the debate about the resolutions.

## Negotiating Committee selected

On the last day, the Caucus delegates and alternates were selected to sit on the main Contract Negotiating Committee along with delegates and alternated to serve on the Safety Sub-

Committee, who will join with the Coast Committee Officers to lead the contract talks.

## Solidarity from the pensioners

Pacific Coast Pensioners Association President Greg Mitre pledged their support and solidarity to the active membership.

"You have a lot of pensioners who are retired from the job but not the struggle, and we are ready, willing, and able to support the active membership in any way we can," he said.

## Negotiating priorities

President Adams said that the caucus showed the ILWU was unified.

"We are a democratic union, and I wouldn't have it any other way. The membership gave us the direction for negotiations and we are ready to go get the best possible agreement," Adams said. "We're coming out of this caucus as strong as we've ever been. We are moving forward and moving in the same direction."

# Former ILWU Local 52 member Max Vekich sworn in as Federal Maritime Commissioner

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mix of industry knowledge, excellent problem-solving abilities, and an internal compass that points to doing right by America's workers, businesses, consumers, and farmers. We applaud Pres. Biden for making an excellent pick, and the U.S. Senate for their confirmation."

U.S. Senator Maria Cantwell (D-WA), Chair of the Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation was a champion for Vekich's appointment. "I want a Federal Maritime Commission that looks at increasing competition and making sure that we get products to people who need them," Sen. Cantwell said. "Somebody who has served on the docks for much of his life is certainly a nominee that understands what it takes to be making important decisions on this activity. In light of many issues, COVID challenges, and congestion, I think his nomination is pivotal to making sure that we have the right decision making in place."

## Warm welcome

FMC Chairman Daniel Maffei welcomed Commissioner Vekich. "Commissioner Vekich assumes office when his lifelong experience working on the waterfront will be especially beneficial. He understands port and supply chain issues from the perspective of a worker on the frontlines of making cargo move. I am confident he will have many important contributions to make to the work of the Federal Maritime Commission and I am happy to welcome him as a colleague," said Maffei.

"Since my first day on the waterfront, my work ethic has always been to keep cargo moving, and that will be my priority in executing my duties as a Commissioner," said Vekich after being sworn in. "Keeping cargo moving is the mindset and emphasis needed to identify and address port and supply chain issues. I look forward to getting to work and am humbled at the opportunity to serve."

## Deep roots

In an interview with the Dispatcher, Commissioner Vekich described his deep roots in the maritime industry.

"My family has been deeply involved with the ILWU for generations. My dad, Max Vekich, Sr. was a dispatcher in Aberdeen, WA from 1953 on and had the distinction of being the longest office holder of a local for many years," Vekich said. "He got into the industry because of Harry Bridges. They met when Bridges was organizing for the CIO and my dad was a sawmill worker. I started with a great influence. My dad was always a Bridges' man, and I came from Aberdeen which was a Bridges' local. That's a heck of a good start in life on the docks."

Commissioner Vekich described his strong commitment to public service and ensuring that government works for the public good. "At the end of my political career in the legislature, there were some people that ran against the idea of government,"

Vekich said. "Then, after they got elected, they did their best to sabotage government from the inside. Then they would say, 'See, government doesn't work.' I think that's such a cynical and un-American approach. I'm not one of those guys. As public servants, we are here to do a job. The public pays us and we're going to work for them. That was how I felt before and it's a mindset that I never lost. It's a privilege to work with the public. That hit home for me again when I swore my oath of office with FMC. It reminded me how proud I am to serve the public and to serve my country."

He said when the supply chain crisis began to emerge, he wrote a letter to Pres. Biden expressing interest in the FMC position with the encouragement of ILWU President Willie Adams. "Even though it was time for me to retire, I thought maybe I ought to step up and volunteer to help do what I can and to bring a workers' point of view to

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# ILWU International President Willie Adams elected President of SF Port Commission

The San Francisco Port Commission elected President Willie Adams as president and Doreen Woo Ho as vice president at their January 11, 2022 meeting. Willie Adams has served on the Port Commission since 2012. Doreen Woo Ho has served on the Port Commission since 2011. They have been elected to serve two-year terms.

The Port of San Francisco is governed by a five-member Board of Commissioners, each of whom is appointed by the Mayor and subject to confirmation by the City’s Board of Supervisors. Each commissioner is appointed to a four-year term. The Port Commission is responsible for the seven and one-half miles of San Francisco Waterfront adjacent to San Francisco Bay, which the Port develops, markets, leases, administers, manages, and maintains.

“As someone who served a lifetime in the maritime industry and the Port as a commissioner since 2011, I am happy

to once again serve as President of this distinguished body,” said Adams. “The San Francisco waterfront is a dynamic environment that services 24 million people per year, from the international tourist to the ferry commuter. As president, I will expand the maritime tradition while looking for new opportunities to expand Port operations.”

President Adams was appointed to the Port Commission by Mayor Edwin M. Lee in July 2012. Adams previously served as the Commission’s vice president (2014, 2015, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021) and president (2016 and 2017). Adams previously served on the San Francisco Film Commission.

“I look forward to working with President Adams and Vice President Woo Ho,” said Elaine Forbes, Executive Director of the Port of San Francisco. “The newly elected Commission Officers are exceptional leaders whose tremendous experience and expertise will serve the Port well as we laser focus on economic recovery, advancing racial equity and addressing our seismic and sea level rise challenges.”

# Former ILWU Local 52 member Max Vekich sworn in as Federal Maritime Commissioner

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the supply chain crisis,” Vekich said. “I hope more ILWU members and more union members in general get involved in government at whatever level they can. We don’t get enough workers’ perspectives and voices in these decision-making bodies. Workers can bring practical experience and knowledge to commission boards, state legislatures, and Congress.”

## Celebrating new beginnings

On February 24th, a retirement celebration was held at The Hall at Fauntleroy in Seattle. The event was attended by Max’s friends, family, ILWU members, and pensioners, local and national elected officials, including Senator Maria Cantwell. Coast Committeeman Cam Williams attended on behalf of the ILWU. The small gathering of about 50 people came together to celebrate Max’s

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many contributions to the ILWU during his long career and to wish him well as he moves on the serve the country as FMC Commissioner.

“Max has taught me a lot. He’s been a mentor and I’m happy for his retirement, and his next adventure,” said Local 19 member Dan McKisson who succeeded Max as Chair of the Longshore Division’s Legislative Committee.

## Making history

Sen. Cantwell spoke at the event and said that Max’s appointment was historic.

“The Federal Maritime Commission has probably been around at some form or another for 100 years. This is only the second time in the history of the organization that there will be a labor commissioner and the first time there will be a member who was a member of the ILWU.”

## TRANSITIONS

### NEW PENSIONERS:

**Local 4:** Jerry Gagliardi Terry J. Krebsler; **Local 10:** Raymond F. Cocco; Daniel C. Mannings; Jose Willis; **Local 8:** Craig Pettit; **Local 13:** Ronnie J. Anglada; Robert Gonzalez; Nicolas Mora; Vincent R. Munoz; Alfonso C. Navarro; Larry E. Wade; Steven A. Whitlock; Dennis E. Wright; **Local 19:** Kurtis S Buslach; David Heredia; Tamara A. San Miguel; **Local 23:** Byron P Baydo; Robert J. Bocanegra; Floyd J. DeSerisy; Jerry Tomal; Curt D Wheeler; **Local 29:** Nemesio Famoso; Angel C. Lopez; **Local 46:** Ernest Castro; Phyl Faumuina; **Local 52:** Barry P. Mitchell; **Local 54:** Richard A Santos; **Local 63:** Barbara E. Center; Nina D. McGee; Carla M Payton; Norbert Saavedra; **Local 63-OCU:** Dorothy “Dottie” Camacho-Gogue; Jenne Chiu; Pao-Chu “Cody” Wu; Joanne Mannino; **Local 98:** Gary Brown; Scott J. West;

### DECEASED PENSIONERS:

**Local 8:** Glenn E. Freeman; Kenneth Glidewell Jr; Wayne Hassebroek; Austin L. Ourada; William T. Player; **Local 10:** Leonard Malliett; David L. Noble; **Local 12:** Harry G. Thomas Sr; **Local 13:** Gregory H. Brown (Mirian); Marie C. Contreras; Bruce M. Craven; Jesse Cruz; Diana Marefos;

Eddie M. Muldrow; Carlos J. Torres; Charles E. Walker; Donald J. White; **Local 21:** Richard C. Johnson; **Local 23:** Raymond D. Strub; **Local 24:** Lennart H. Asplund; Richard D. Nickle; **Local 32:** Kelly S Dicey (Michael); **Local 34:** Nelson Simpson; **Local 40:** Gregory L. Mosher; Ralph L. Sirianni; **Local 46:** Milo G. Valdivia; **Local 50:** Raymond S. Daniels; **Local 54:** Robert R. Ruiz; **Local 63:** Dennis J. Barbieri; Paul J. O’Donnell; Larry L. Womack; **Local 92:** Gary W. Veitenheimer (Laurie);

### DECEASED ACTIVE MEMBERS:

**Local 10:** Warren V. Simmons; Lynn A. Beamon; **Local 13:** Louie Mendoza Jr; Anthony E. Limon; Michael E. Williams; **Local 19:** James E. Bump; **Local 46:** Warren D Shelton;

### DECEASED SURVIVORS:

**Local 8:** Fairy B. Miles; **Local 10:** Marcianita A. Bork; Linda K. Brecht; Jennie V. Correll; Joan D. Millard; Bertha E. Tijero; **Local 12:** Holly Stamper; **Local 13:** Eddie M. Muldrow; **Local 19:** Sandra M. Burke; Marlene M. Flanary; **Local 23:** Dolores I. Wilson; **Local 24:** Barbara Goodin; **Local 50:** Fay Kelley; **Local 63:** Irma Provoost-Lease; Juanita Chavez Stevens; **Local 94:** Margaret D. Ponce;

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