



# THE DISPATCHER

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**Welcome to the ILWU:** Local 29 President Anthony Soniga congratulates Rose Diana Gualos after swearing-in Local 29-A's newest members following a successful three-year organizing campaign at Four Seasons Fresh Transport in San Diego.

## Four Seasons warehouse workers sworn in as members of Local 29-A after ratifying first contract

**Substantial gains won after three-year organizing battle, help and solidarity from ILWU members across Southern California**

**F**ive new members of ILWU Local 29-A, Local 29's warehouse division, were sworn in by Local 29 President Anthony Soniga at a membership meeting on March 17 after workers unanimously ratified their first contract with Four Seasons Fresh Transport, a transfer facility at the Port of San Diego.

### Three-year fight

The ratification was the culmination of three years of organizing, including more than a year of bargaining to reach an agreement on the first contract. Workers won substantial economic improvements including nearly doubling their wages,

sick leave, healthcare, and retirement benefits.

Workers at Four Seasons voted unanimously for ILWU representation in October of 2021. Before organizing with the ILWU, wages for workers were so low that some workers commuted from Tijuana, Mexico to make ends meet.

"We were making the minimum wage. Gas and prices have been going up. By joining to the ILWU we were able to negotiate health insurance, better wages, and the working environment will also be better. I never thought I would have the opportunity to be a part of this union and I couldn't be more grateful," said Four Seasons worker Rose Diana Gualos.

"These warehouse workers reached out to us to help them orga-

nize," Soniga said at the membership meeting. "We've got to protect our existing workforce and we also have to reach out to other workers that need our help, give them a hand, and bring them along with us."

### ILWU solidarity

The victory was won with the commitment, courage, and unity of the Four Seasons warehouse workers, and solidarity from the ILWU family. Local 29 members had the backs of the workers from the earliest days of the campaign.

In September of 2021, 30 members from Local 29 joined Four Seasons workers as they marched on the boss with a petition asking the company for voluntary union recognition. Local 63 OCU President John

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# ILWU Canada's International Women's Day Event

In 2023 there was a letter circulated advertising leadership training for trade union women. At this time a local union official asked the question: What is the benefit of training women in leadership to the union? A long conversation ensued, and this individual did end up understanding but this question stuck in my head.

Several months later I attended the second annual ILWU Women's Convention in San Francisco where there was a large delegation from Canada present. Here we all experienced the value of training trade union women in leadership. We shared new ideas; we lifted each other up and we strategized how to use our diversity to strengthen our unions and build solidarity across locals as we stood side by side in our battles to protect working people. I came home from this event fired up and ready to go. A couple of months later I was working with another woman who also attended the women's conference in San Francisco, and we reflected on the great experiences we had there. It was at this moment that we knew we had to do something to reignite that energy and apply our learnings. Thus, a plan was formed.

On November 17, 2023, I put out the call to the women from Canada who attended the San Francisco convention, and the plan took shape - an ILWU Canada International Women's Day (IWD) event.

We faced a very tight schedule, especially with Christmas right around the corner but these ladies hit the ground running. We booked our venue; obviously, it had to be at the Maritime Labour Centre; Local 500 generously paid the booking fee for us.

In December I had the good fortune of seeing Mich-Elle Myers Assis-

tant National Secretary of the Maritime Union of Australia. On impulse, I invited her to be a keynote speaker at our event. It went something like this: "We are having our first-ever International Women's Day event and would love to have you as a speaker but.... we have no money to pay for your travel. Can you come?" To my great delight and surprise, Mich-Elle did not hesitate when she replied that she would love to attend and asked that I send a formal invitation. I immediately shared with the group my presumptuous invitation, and everyone was as excited as I was to have secured such a great keynote speaker. I think for me this was the moment where I realized that we were going to do this and our dream would be a reality.

I won't trouble you with too many more details of our committee work, but briefly, we designed a new logo for the t-shirts and hoodies and arranged food, tickets, tattoo artists, and volunteers to help run the event. I have to add here that ILWU Canada's Jeannie Magenta was instrumental in helping us with many planning details. We also were able to secure two more prestigious speakers - Angela Talic of Local 500 and Brittnei Paquette of Local 508.

As part of Mich-Elle's visit, we arranged some dock tours. We visited DPW at Fraser Surrey Docks and then at Centerm. We also arranged a surprise visit to ILWU Canada's Young Workers Committee meeting; the group was thrilled to have time to meet with her. We followed this with a quiet dinner and a good night's sleep before the big day. The morning of March 8, we all arrived early and buzzed around as some of us got our tattoos and we all waited to begin. The excitement was high, and we were excited to welcome about 180 people!

Our emcee, Scarlett Kelly of Local 500, kicked things off by



From left to right: Lisa Stevenson – Local 514, Cherise Noullett – Local 502, Brittnei Paquette – Local 508, Stephanie Dobler – Local 514, Jessica Isbister – ILWU Canada, Mich-Elle Myers – MUA at DP World Fraser Surrey Dock, Surrey, BC.

introducing from Squamish Nation, Shayla Jacobs and her daughter Soriah Jacobs who welcomed us to the unceded land on which our event was held. Both mother and daughter spoke eloquently, and Soriah graced us with a traditional dance of welcome and the singing of the Women's Warrior song. Following this our first speaker, Angela Talic shared her story as a young woman in a male-dominated longshore workplace. Angela's raw honesty and truth were felt by every attendee. Our Young Worker Speaker, Brittnei Paquette was up next and she spoke about the importance of women's participation and honoring our past as we look to our future.

After a delicious dinner, our long wait to hear Mich-Elle was over. Mich-Elle took to the stage and immediately connected with each person when she shared the nervousness she had felt while waiting to speak. Mich-Elle's ability to speak to our large group yet make each of us individually feel heard and seen was remarkable. Mich-Elle shared her journey to leadership from her beginnings as a wharfie at Patrick Terminal. She encouraged us to work together and lift our sisters up, to never doubt our importance, and

to make space at the table. We were ever so thankful to Mich-Elle for making time out of her busy schedule to join us on this special day.

Looking back I am now grateful to the individual who questioned the benefit of the union of providing women's leadership training. ILWU Guiding Principle number one tells us that the union is built upon its membership, our membership is diverse and it is in this diversity that we gain our strength. This includes diversity in leadership. And of course, I must mention Guiding Principle number three:

Workers are indivisible. There can be no discrimination because of race, color, creed, national origin, religious or political belief, sex, gender preference, or sexual orientation. Any division among the workers can help no one but the employers. Discrimination of worker against worker is suicide. Discrimination is a weapon of the boss. Its entire history is proof that it has served no other purpose than to pit worker against worker to their own destruction.

Thank you to the entire committee for your tireless work and faith in this vision. Without your dedication, this never would have been possible. We are also thankful to the volunteers who showed up on the day and worked hard to make our event run smoothly. Your assistance on the day was so appreciated. Further thanks to all who attended our inaugural IWD event. We were honored to have local attendees, out-of-town guests, out-of-province guests, and even guests from out of the country. It was your presence that made our day spectacular.

Jessica Isbister  
3rd Vice President, ILWU Canada



ILWU Canada's inaugural International Women's Day Event.

## DISPATCHER

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# Local 23’s ‘Celebration of Black History and Labor’ event revives Tacoma longshore tradition

ILWU Local 23 celebrated Black History Month by holding an event titled “A Celebration of Black History and Labor” on February 18 at Tacoma’s Foss Waterway Seaport Museum. The event honored the accomplishments of Black workers in Tacoma and also those who battled discrimination and fought for equal opportunities for all workers.

The event featured distinguished speakers and artistic performances. Guests included ILWU International President Willie Adams, Coast Committeeman Cam Williams, ILWU Canada Secretary-Treasurer Bob Dhaliwal, Alaska Longshore Division Vice President Jeff Hancock, Mayor of Tacoma Victoria Woodards, and many local elected officials. Local 23 pensioner Rodney Rhyme was the emcee for the event which was attended by more than 300 people.

### Twenty-year hiatus

Local 23 revived this event in Tacoma after a more than 20-year hiatus. The original events were first organized by Local 23 members Willie Adams and Mike Chambers and were first held at the Port of Tacoma building. As the event grew in popularity, it was moved to the Sheraton Hotel—now the Hotel Murano—and then to the Pantages Theater in downtown Tacoma. Over the years, the event has welcomed notable figures such as Danny Glover, Yolanda King, Cicely Tyson, Chuck D, and baseball great Buck O’Neil from the Negro American League.

Local 23 President Jared Faker welcomed everyone to the event and celebrated its return:

“This event started over 20 years ago with Local 23 members Willie Adams and Mike Chambers, and was a tremendous success. Unfortunately, a funny thing happened after that. Nobody picked up the torch to carry it forward. That’s what we are doing today, picking the torch back up, so that our generation can continue and

push the tradition forward,” Faker said. “The ILWU has historically stood at the forefront of the Civil Rights movement, fighting for social justice and equality, to advocate not only for ourselves but for our community at large and we continue to do so today. Events like this are not only important for our community, but they’re also important to remind ourselves of who we are, and who we should be. Tonight, we are going to remember some of our forgotten history and we are going to see firsthand what a great equalizer that the labor movement is for people of all backgrounds.”

### Remembering Ernie Tanner

Local 23 young worker John Womack introduced a short film about Ernie Tanner, an iconic figure in Tacoma longshore history and a key player in the 1934 West Coast Waterfront Strike. Tanner started on the waterfront after the strike in 1916 and joined the old Tacoma longshore union on December 26, 1918. Tanner established a reputation as an excellent winch driver and union man and a strong advocate that Black longshore workers enjoy the same wages and working conditions as white workers.

During the 1934 West Coast Waterfront Strike, Tanner was the sole Black member of the Northwest Joint Strike Committee, working closely with Harry Bridges to maintain Black and white unity during the 82-day strike.

In 1936 Tanner was elected chair of the local’s Publicity Committee and also served on the Executive Board and as a Trustee from 1933-1939 and 1948-1953. When the ILWU was formed in 1937, Tacoma was one of the few holdouts to stay with the ILA but Tanner continued advocating for affiliating with the ILWU. Harry Bridges made regular trips to Tacoma over the years to try and win over the local, often staying with the Tanner family while in town. Famously, when asked by the National Labor Relations Board what he thought of an employer-controlled hiring hall, Tanner replied: “I’d quit the waterfront first.”

### Spoken word performance

Zeek Green, a Local 98 Foreman at the Port of Tacoma, gave a spoken word performance of his piece “Thank You,” which honored Black longshore workers who paved the way for him and other Black workers on the waterfront. In part:

“You all deserve a lot more credit and here is my portion; if you didn’t prove that we are men, I would not be a longshoreman  
“So thank you for all you did and did not do; to forget all that you went through would be to dishonor you “and I have nothing but the utmost respect; for those who taught me that earning a living is about so much more than just a paycheck!”

### Honoring Isaac “Ike” Morrow

International President Willie Adams honored pensioner Isaac “Ike” Morrow with the Industry Impact Award for the profound influence his career had on the longshore industry and Local 23.



**Honoring Ike Morrow:** Isaac Morrow was the recipient of the Industry Impact Award at the Celebration of Black History and Labor event. ILWU International President Willie Adams (left) presented the award to Ike’s son Terry who accepted the honor on behalf of his father who was unable to attend.

Morrow began working on the waterfront as a casual in 1962 and got his A book in 1965. In 1972 he became the youngest and only the second Black person to be promoted to foreman. As a foreman, Morrow introduced the concept of on-dock intermodal rail which had a major impact on the longshore industry and the Port of Tacoma.

President Adams said that Morrow was a mentor and an inspiration to him on the waterfront and that his work ethic, leadership, and ingenuity commanded respect throughout the industry. Adams added that his career was profoundly influenced by Morrow and that if not for his trailblazing efforts and constant support, he would never have gone on to become International President.

“Standing up here today, I feel the presence of Ike Morrow next to me. Ike wasn’t a Black hero, he was an American hero,” Adams said. “He represented the best of the great longshoremen; he was a great foreman. We all owe him a debt of gratitude. Willie Adams doesn’t become International President if there is no Ike Morrow.”

Receiving the honor on Ike’s behalf was Terry Morrow, one of Ike’s four sons, all of whom became longshoremen themselves.

### Keynote address

The evening’s keynote address was delivered by Washington State Labor Council (WSLC) President April Sims, the first woman to be elected WSLC President and the first Black woman elected to the presidency of an AFL-CIO state federation.

President Sims recounted her family’s lived experience which demonstrated the power and impact that organized labor has to change lives. She is the granddaughter of Louisiana sharecroppers and the daughter of a single mother. Sims recounted how the Great Migration brought her grandfather to Washington State where his job as a union janitor provided economic dignity for his family, how her mom’s union job pulled their family out of a cycle of poverty, and her union job provided her family with economic security.

“I know firsthand the difference our collective work makes in the lives of workers, families, and communities. I know the generational impact of a good union job. At the State Labor Council, we are committed to doing the work that lifts workers, their families, and their communities. We are committed to the fight for racial and economic justice,” Sims said. “We know our strength and power is rooted in our solidarity. And anything that divides us makes us weak. We have always known in the labor movement that solidarity is our strength and our power,” Sims said. “We recognize that the fate of all workers—black and brown or indigenous, Asian or white—are interconnected. We either rise together, or we fail.”

Sims said that it is not enough for the labor movement to focus on just economic issues of the workplace but must also confront other forms of oppression faced by workers.

“When the 24-hour news cycle demonizes black and brown immigrants, when the voting rights of Native peoples are suppressed, when dog whistles and bigotry spew from the mouths of the folks that are running to lead this country, when the most vulnerable among us are trapped in cycles of poverty, sticking to workplace issues will not be enough,” Sims said. “We have to decide whether we are going to focus on the narrow issues, economic issues of the workplace or are we going to address the tough issues of our collective issues like climate justice, racial equity, reproductive freedom, worker dignity, gender rights, the issues of our community.”

Local 23’s Nandi Seboulisa closed out the evening with a moving performance of “Lift Every Voice and Sing,” better known as the “Black National Anthem,” written by NAACP leader James Weldon Johnson and later set to music by his younger brother J. Rosamond Johnson.



**Lift every voice:** Local 23’s Nandi Seboulisa gave a moving performance of the Black National Anthem to close out the Celebration of Black History and Labor.





# We are the ILWU



## Kesa Sten President Local 52 Seattle, WA

**My history on the waterfront started well before my first shift.** My mom's stepdad was a Marine Clerk here in Seattle at Local 52. My mom got his book when he passed away. Within the year that she was registered, she was pregnant with me. I grew up on the waterfront. I learned to drive down here and grew up in the hiring hall. My step-

dad was a crane operator for many years before he passed away and my mom retired a couple of years ago. I got in when I was 18. My first shift was in 2004. At the time I didn't want to do it; I went to college instead of coming down and hustling. For a lot of years, it was my summertime job. After I graduated I lived in Arizona and worked at a nonprofit. One of the LRC members called me and said, "You either come home and get registered or you get kicked off the list." So I came home and I got registered. I started working and worked my way up. I went A-side and then started getting into leadership roles running for Executive Board, trustee, and things like that—just absorbing everything I could.

I want to acknowledge my privilege. My experience isn't like a lot of other people's. My parents were both well respected on the waterfront. Their reputation preceded me and they instilled in me a great work ethic. The relationships that they had with people in the industry got passed on to me. My voice came from the fact that I already had relationships with a lot of people. I felt comfortable stepping up when I was finally allowed to do so as a registered member.

Anytime I've run for any position, it's always come from a place of pride. I am proud of everything the ILWU does for us but also for what it does for the greater good of the communities we live and work in. Our local needed leadership after our previous president decided he didn't want to run anymore. People kept asking me to run. I had a baby in 2022 and I had stepped back a lot. I decided to run because I believe that as a group, we can make better decisions and our organization is stronger when we work together. It doesn't come from just one person. I may have the title of president but I'm not alone in making the decisions—we do that as a group. I am just the talking head for Local 52. We are all in charge. We are all stewards of our union.

I'm not the first woman president of Local 52. Andrea Stevenson was the first president 10 years ago. That speaks volumes as to how far we've come but also how far we still have to go—on the one hand people don't remember the last time Local 52 had a woman president, on the other

hand here I am doing it again. I have all the support in the world. Andrea is on speed dial and available to answer questions I may have or just to provide support.

I owe a lot to the women who came before me in Local 19 and Local 52. There are women who had a much harder path to walk than I did. I'm eternally grateful to them for being brave enough to see it through. Because of them, more doors are open to those of us coming up behind them.

It wasn't too long ago that I was going to work and I would often be the only woman in the entire gang, just like the stories I would hear from previous generations. The attitudes toward women had drastically changed, but the numbers didn't look much different. I wouldn't see a face that looked like mine anywhere else on the dock. Now that's few and far between. We have women operators, women supercargoes, women clerks, and women foremen. We're all over the place. It would behoove us to reach behind us and offer a hand to the women coming up next. I used to drive equipment when I was a Local 19 member and other women who didn't drive equipment yet would come up to me and tell me they were hesitant to try.

I told them, "Don't ever pass on an opportunity to take any training. Don't ever pass on the opportunity to take any job whether you've done it before or not. More often than not, you're going to excel at whatever job it is. You're only afraid of it because you haven't done it before."

My whole life has been born out of and come to fruition because of the ILWU—my education, my career, my family, my ideals, and my politics. I hope to continue to contribute in meaningful ways to the betterment of my local and the union as a whole. And that drive comes from a long line of women who came before me wanting to be better and make things better for everyone.

I am so proud to be coming into a moment in time where there are more women in ILWU leadership roles than ever before and that the international and locals are lifting women up and giving our foremothers their accolades. Our future leaders are finding their voices because of the women who came before us. I know, without a doubt, that I have already met the first woman international president of the ILWU.



## Jadine Trujillo Vice President Local 34 Bay Area

**I started on the waterfront in November of 1997.** I was 22 when I came down and I had no idea what I was getting into. I applied because my mom told me to and I knew that if I didn't apply she would be mad.

My first job was a replacement job on a Saturday. I had coveralls and nobody picked me up at the gate. I walked through the whole yard to get to the ship. I just felt so small in this huge container yard, like a little ant or something. It was a basic clerk job against the vessel. The next week I got this paycheck in the mail and I was like, "This is a great job!"

I've done a lot of different jobs except drive the crane. I've driven top pick. I just felt so small in that huge machine but I liked driving everything else. I lashed exclusively for many years. I was on nights for a long time as well. I traveled to LA back and forth because it was a time when the work was slow here. I've traveled all over Southern California. I have worked in San Diego and Port Hueneme.

I was a dispatcher at Local 10 and I've been on the Local 10 Executive Board.

About 17 years ago I transferred to Local 34 and I've been on multiple committees here: executive board and labor relations committee. Currently, I'm Local 34's Vice President. It's been a progression for sure. It's interesting how you could be in one field and wear so many hats throughout the years.

I come from a very blue-collar, union family. My mom has 13 Brothers and sisters, and almost all of them are in or retired from a union. My grandfather was a Teamster. My mom was in a union. She was a grocery clerk and she's retired on her pension. My dad was a Teamster and he's retired on his pension. He was a business agent and a shop steward. There was always this talk of union stuff around me growing up and I think it just kind of seeped in.



My son just went to college. I have another teenager who's ready to leave very shortly. So it just felt like now was the time to dedicate myself to the union and let the union be my baby now. The opportunity was available to me so I took the jump into the full-time position as the vice president. Before that, I just etched out time being on different boards which doesn't require that much time—maybe you have one meeting a month. I've always been active in running for different committees because it was a time allotment I could give and I wanted to give it. Now that I have more time, I decided to go all in and serve the union.

I'm used to being the only woman in the room. I'm not uncomfortable in that position. I've learned to navigate and hold that space for myself. I've only had one experience that was unpleasant with another member, but besides that, it has been positive. This is my family and that matters to me.

When I first came on the waterfront, a lot of the old-timers were retiring and they passed on a wealth of knowledge to me. That's how this job works. The older members teach newer members how to keep this family safe, productive, and moving in the right direction. They were extremely respectful. They wouldn't cuss in front of me and they would get mad at somebody who was using any language that was unprofessional in front of me. It was very welcoming. The whole ride has been positive. There are a lot more women now that are coming into the industry. I think it's a good thing to have more diversity all around.

I'm the second woman vice president at Local 34. Jeanette Walker-Peoples came before me and broke that barrier. She's been very supportive of me in this role and so I'm thankful to her. I'm glad she came before. She set things forward and opened the door. I think that made a big difference.

I would like to see more women on different committees, and taking more leadership roles. I think sometimes as a woman, we wait until we fill all the qualifications before we jump in the pool. I don't think that's necessarily how men look at things. I think as women, we just need to believe in ourselves and take that jump. I want to encourage every member, not just women, to run for different committees. If you feel passionate, you should be on a committee because that's the kind of energy we need. Don't be scared to do it. In almost every job I've had on this waterfront, I learned on the job. Get on a committee and then build yourself into the next thing you want to do. Let that be a stepping stone. Start on something small, and then go on to the next and the next.

The union has given me success throughout my life, not only financially or having amazing benefits and a pension that I can look forward to one day, but it's also given me a backbone to stand up on; it's given me a family to depend on and it's given me strength and a voice that we're all collectively working towards something universal. We're all working towards having better conditions on the job, safety on the job, and supporting each other.

When you go places and you say you're from the ILWU people look up to that name. It means something strong. I'm thankful every day for this job. I don't know where I would be if I didn't have this job. I was in college when I started. I didn't finish because this was such a good job. It was such a good family to be welcomed into that I put college to the side and let this become my life. I'm glad I did.



**Rena Way**  
**Secretary-Treasurer**  
**Local 18**  
**West Sacramento, CA**

**I became a registered B-man in October of 2004.** I am a Child of the Deceased. My father was a longshoreman who passed away. He was injured on a line job, but that wasn't what killed him. It was an infection that he got during the process of healing that took his life. That was a shocking and

unbelievable situation for my mother and me. She proceeded with the Child of the Deceased letter and did her part so that I could come into the industry. I honestly didn't know what I was getting into. I had been to the port several times as a kid but I never knew exactly everything that the job entailed until I started.

I wasn't well received in the beginning. I was the first woman registered at Local 18. There were women on our casual list, but there were no women members in the local. And there was no one in the local under the age of 35 at that time. Not only was I the youngest person, but I was also the first woman. It was just a different world then. Women weren't coming out to our port at that time. We are a small port. It's not that they didn't like women, it just was foreign to them. I didn't have a good start to my career, but I just continued on my little journey without worrying about what the old-timers had to say.

I got my A-book in the first quarter of 2006. At the end of 2007, our secretary-treasurer retired on a disability and left the position vacant. Under

our bylaws, since it was within three months of an election, the president at that time, Derek Peterson, appointed me as secretary-treasurer. I was only in the position for a few months, so I said, "If I'm gonna give this a go, I should run for the position and see what I can do for a full year." And that's what I did. I was elected to the position for the following year in 2008. That was my first year as the elected secretary-treasurer. Here I am in 2024 and I'm still the secretary-treasurer and have been the entire time, not one year off. Our local votes once a year; I've been voted in all these years.

I love the secretary-treasurer job. That is my way of giving back to Local 18 for all of the things that I had been getting from the union. I was a child of a member so I have been enjoying ILWU benefits and everything else my whole life. Once I became a member, being an officer was my way of giving back to the industry. Since I started as secretary-treasurer we've had three or four different waves of new A-men coming out of our port. They've continued to put their faith in me and that's part of the reason why I continue to run. I like helping, and once I started helping and started doing things for people, I felt that joy, and that made me want to do more. I've done other things. I've been vice president a couple of times over the years. I am a caucus delegate currently and have been a caucus delegate for several years. I've been on our executive board quite a few times. But secretary-treasurer is what I've always been and the position that I love the most.

I was the first woman registered and the first woman to hold office. I'm the only person who's ever held an office at Local 18 as long as I have now—17 years. I'm a lot of firsts at Local 18, but those firsts don't mean anything unless you do something positive with them. I've always strived to be a person that not just women can look up to, but young people, men, or anyone. I want them to see that you can start as a young person from the bottom, and if you continue to do the right thing, you can make it as high as you want. I'm also a supplemental foreman. I was the first woman to be on the supplemental foreman list at Local 18. That is important for me because I was so scared and lost when I came in. I didn't know where I fit in. I want to show people that even when faced with a bit of adversity you can still achieve everything you want through this union as long as you stay the course and do the right thing.

When I first started in 2004, we had a handful of women on the casual list as extra help—and I mean five or fewer women. It is very different now. In 20 years, it's gone from that to now where women are nearly a 50/50 split. Not only that, but the age range is more diverse too. It used to take a very long time to get into this local. Now through all the different things that the Coast Committee has done to speed up registration, groups are coming in at younger ages. It's nice to see all the different changes not just in gender, but just the different ethnicities, different age groups, and different people from all walks of life.

The ILWU has given me everything from when I was a kid up until now. It's been a wonderful experience for me from the time I was 19. I'm 39 and I feel just as passionate, focused, and driven to be a part of the positive things that happen with the ILWU as was when I started. I don't see myself stopping even after all these years of being in office. I just want to continue to do well and serve my union and serve its members.

I want women to know that there is a place for all of us here. In my local nobody gets left behind. We're all just a big team. The women bring so much to the local. You can't deny that women bring good, strong, work-ethics to our industry. Our women are just as tough and hard-working as any man. They are on time and treat the job with respect. We've got all kinds of different people in our local and I'm proud of us for that. I'm proud of us for being a well-rounded, diverse group of people that respect each other. We take care of the job and that's what it's all about.

**Dorothy "Auntie Dot"**  
**Sakamoto**  
**Oahu Pensioners**  
**Hawaii**

**I went to work at the Dole Pineapple cannery for the summer when I was 16.** After I graduated from high school in 1962, I became a regular worker there. My mother was also working at the cannery. She was a shop steward. I was exposed to union services very early in life. I didn't understand all of the things about the union at the time but I knew I loved the group. I loved the ladies who were running the union. We had solidarity. We trusted these women to lead us. That's what I embraced. I took everything for granted; they did all the work and made us feel safe.

We went on strike in 1968. What was amazing about the strike was the unity. When our leaders told us that we were going to strike and walk out, we were ready. We did what they told us to do because we trusted our leaders to do what was best for the members.

It was difficult. We were getting \$1.25 an hour which sucked, but that's





# ILWU, community coalition, defeats proposed baseball stadium on Oakland waterfront

## *Stadium redevelopment project posed threat to waterfront jobs and regional economic engine*



In late 2018, the Oakland A's, the Mayor of Oakland, Alameda County Supervisors, building and construction trades, local business leaders, state legislators, and the Commissioners at the Port of Oakland formed an impressive and formidable unified front when all of them joined together to announce that they wanted to eliminate a large swath of the working, industrial Oakland waterfront. This elimination was to have taken place to accommodate the plan of the billionaire owner of the Oakland A's, John Fisher, to turn Howard Terminal into a miniature version of the gentrified San Francisco waterfront – complete with new condominiums, office towers, and hotels, in addition to a baseball stadium meant to compete with the Giants' stadium across the Bay.

The A's envisioned fans sailing in the Oakland navigational channel with an "armada" of boats, watching fireworks and listening to music on party barges in the turning basin, shifting freight rail traffic to non-game days,

and replacing truck routes with bicycle lanes and new sidewalks for fans – and shutting down a facility under longshore jurisdiction and the home of a PMA-ILWU training center. The stadium project also threatened the viability of cargo movements at other terminals in Oakland, increased congestion, and the promise of a future larger turning basin, which is critical to maintaining the Port of Oakland's competitiveness.

In the face of overwhelming political odds, the ILWU stood firm and fought for its members. We also became a founding member of an unprecedented coalition of every major waterfront group that had a stake in the future of the Port of Oakland. This group was made up of a whole swath of maritime labor, including ILWU locals, the Inlandboatmen's Union (IBU), Masters, Mates & Pilots (MM&P), Marine Engineers Beneficial Association, Marine Firemen, and more. We began meeting first at the IBU hall in San Francisco and then at MM&P in Oakland. Joining us were maritime, trucking, and railroad groups, including the Pacific Merchant Shipping Association, Harbor Trucking Association, California Trucking Association, and the Union Pacific Railroad, plus

individual local Oakland companies like Schnitzer Steel and GSC Logistics, Cool Fresh, and BNSF Railroad.

We named ourselves the East Oakland Stadium Alliance (EOSA) and hired a public affairs firm, Berg Davis, led by Jessica Berg and Evette Davis. EOSA was founded in response to the Oakland A's plans for a private ballpark and luxury real estate development at Howard Terminal. We led with the belief that it is in the best interest of Oakland residents, the seaport, the Oakland A's, and its fans for a new, state-of-the-art major league baseball stadium to be constructed at the Coliseum site in East Oakland. With that as our goal, we also worked closely with other community and environmental groups in Oakland, including progressive Democratic clubs, the Oakland NAACP, the Sierra Club, Bay Keeper, Save the Bay, and various churches and other active grassroots volunteers. We were aided by the fact that A's owner, John Fisher, has been a funder of groups attempting to privatize Oakland schools and promote school privatization nationally, which brought several other activists and the Oakland Education Association to rally with us against more privatization in Oakland.

We were not afraid to take on the powerful interests intent on building a stadium on the Oakland waterfront. Working with the other maritime stakeholders, we set out to protect our jobs and jurisdiction. When we started EOSA, people outside of the waterfront gave us long odds of stopping this development. They saw the ILWU and our industry partners as the David against an unstoppable Goliath. We were told this was a done deal. But the coalition persisted in our fight for almost 5 years. Opinion polls showed that the project was

were present so that voices could be heard as was Sara Nelson, President of the Association of Flight Attendants-CWA, AFL-CIO.

Mike Parent and Joulene Parent from ILWU Canada came to one of our rallies to show support and solidarity to prevent Howard Terminal from becoming a baseball stadium, hotel, and entertainment complex. We were able to bring out the rank and file and the community. We made sure the volume at the Port Of Oakland was turned up loud so that our voices were heard, and our message was clear: The Port of Oakland is vital to the region's economy and not for sale.

We brought hundreds of people to City Council meetings, state meetings of the BCDC, rallies, press events, tours, and more. Longshore labor voices were necessary to counter other labor voices in the building and construction trades and the existing union labor at the current Coliseum that realized that Fisher's tactic of threatening to move the team and his "Howard Terminal or Bust" rhetoric wasn't just posturing. Fisher intentionally set up labor vs. labor fights, city vs. city competition, and business vs. business in his chase for maximum public subsidies for his stadium.

In the end and against the odds, the A's ultimately abandoned their quest to gentrify the Oakland waterfront. The EOSA coalition outlasted and outfought the A's. Our coalition of labor and community groups was built on the ILWU's conviction that our jobs on the waterfront are unique, irreplaceable, and critical to the economic health of the entire Bay Area.

Although the A's move to Las Vegas is all but inevitable with the recent unanimous vote by Major League Baseball in favor of the team's relocation, we must remain vigilant

***"Our coalition of labor and community groups was built on the ILWU's conviction that our jobs on the waterfront are unique, irreplaceable, and critical to the economic health of the entire Bay Area."***

**– Melvin Mackay, Local 10**

vulnerable to public concerns over the use of taxpayer funds for this project – a prerequisite of Fisher to make the project work. We participated in two different lawsuits against the A's project, one against the City of Oakland's Environmental Impact Report and the other against the State of California's Bay Conservation Development Commission (BCDC), both of which are still pending, and which ultimately threw significant monkey wrenches into the overly-optimistic development timelines for the project.

Throughout these fights, the ILWU Locals 6, 10, 34, 75, 91, and the IBU

to ensure no new efforts are made by the City and the Port of Oakland to once again attempt to repurpose maritime industrial property for housing or entertainment venues. Our coalition of maritime, transportation, logistics, labor, and community stakeholders can continue working towards one common goal: the long-term viability of the Port of Oakland and ensuring that the working waterfront continues to be a vibrant hub of Oakland and the Bay Area economy.

Melvin Mackay  
Local 10



# Four Seasons warehouse workers sworn in as members of Local 29-A after ratifying first contract

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Fageaux, Local 63 OCU Vice President Dawn Feikema, and Local 63 OCU Secretary-Treasurer Shari Delprino assisted workers in contract negotiations.

Scores of ILWU members traveled to San Diego from all over Southern California to support Four Seasons workers when they went out on a one-day strike on November 16, 2023. Members from Locals 13, 29, 29-A, 56, 63 OCU, and the Inlandboatmen's Union marched on the picket line with Four Season's workers starting at 2 a.m. Many ILWU members from Los Angeles made the drive to San Diego with less than 12 hours of notice after hearing about the strike the evening before.

"We are a small group but they made us feel like giants," Gualos said about the ILWU's solidarity.

"When the ILWU showed up and

honored the picket line, we sent a message to the employer that they weren't just dealing with 6 or 7 workers but workers up and down the coast who had their back," said Fageaux who was among the ILWU members who came out to walk the picket line with workers.

### Crossing the finish line

"It was very emotional when we got to the end and I knew we had reached a deal with the employer," said Feikema. "This was a small unit and it was important to keep them together for such a long bargaining period; you can lose hope at times. During negotiations, we were able to keep the ball moving forward with every bargaining session and in the end, we were able to get not just a first contract but a great contract. It's rewarding and an honor for me to fight alongside them and to

have been asked to participate. I am thrilled to be able to see them sworn in tonight as members of this great union."

### Stronger together

Fageaux credited the diverse talents and coordinated efforts of ILWU members who assisted Four Seasons workers in getting a deal done. "We have a lot of talent and experience throughout this union from officers to rank-and-file members," Fageaux said. "It's important to tap into those internal resources that we have to help other members and locals across our union. I saw that negotiating this contract—working with the International Organizing Committee and the officers of Local 29. Things got difficult but no one was phased by it or gave up. We all just kept pushing through. Seeing how important organizing this union and winning a first con-

tract was to these workers made this all worthwhile. Looking into their eyes you could see that failure was not an option. We knew we had to make this work and we did."

Soniga added, "Local 29 was excited to support Four Seasons warehouse workers because it showed that solidarity in the Port of San Diego is strong. We were able to show strength in numbers, respect the picket line of these workers, and show that an injury to one is an injury to all. Knowing that you have a strong union like the ILWU behind you gives you the strength and courage to fight for what you believe in and what you deserve: fair wages, good working conditions, benefits, and a better quality of life for you and your family."



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what we earned. During the strike, I remember going to a place where they were giving out eggs and milk to families that needed it. I would say about 90 percent of the people walked out. We had a few that went back to work and scabbed. We didn't try to protest or whatever. We complained about but it wasn't anything angry or violent. We were always calm. We sang and amused ourselves on the picket line. It was a time of sacrifice.

When we went on strike we struck as an industry. We had these pineapple workers, all on strike at the same time. When we negotiated, we negotiated not as a unit but as the pineapple industry. That's what made us powerful.

When I first worked in the cannery, you experienced the smell of the pineapple and you experienced the heat conditions. The working conditions weren't great. The floor was slippery. It was unsafe. It was messy. When you got on the bus you smelled like pineapple. What was interesting was the tuna packers were also on the bus with us. You smelled pineapple and tuna. I remember all the smells from the industries. When you think about it's a wonderful smell. These industries are all gone. Everything evolves.

In the cannery women were the ones who did the trimming, packing, and handling of the fruit. The men did the heavy work. Most of the packers, trimmers, and supervisors were all women. I remember these strong, Native Hawaiian women were the leaders. They were the ones that were respected. I remember what they meant to me. I was proud to be part of this group of wonderful women. I just saw it as a group of people being united and that's what I liked about it.

At 17 I was naive, innocent, and insecure. Then all of a sudden, I started changing. I started to have a voice and I couldn't understand what was happening to me. Because I had this passion in me, I had to get it out. And that's when it started. I started to be verbal. I started to talk to people. I started to not be afraid. I always feared speaking out. I guess I was afraid of retaliation. I always worried about what people would think and say, but I don't anymore. I evolved into a different person, the person I am now, and I like who I am because I'm free to think and feel the way I want to. It's always about taking care of the members. That was all my priority. I take care of my family, they were my priority. The union is my family outside of my family.

I look back at the experiences I had and how I evolved. I went from packing fruit up to the very top. I did everything and anything. I wanted to make sure that our workers worked in a safe environment. I was very adamant about that because we worked in an industry with a lot of machinery. I operated every single machine in that environment. I even called

OSHA and my union backed me up. I had my division director, my business agent, and a whole bunch of people, the union came up, and we went up to management to have a meeting. That was an awesome feeling—having the union at your back.

## Amber Nelsen Benefits Specialist Local 4 Vancouver, WA

**I was 22 when I started and I was 26 when I was registered.** I work at the grain elevator. I'm just on the non-skilled board. I've done a lot of different jobs. I had a child who was sick so I know how important our health care is. I remember the anger I had about the situation. I had the "why me's". Then I remembered that I have a union. I have insurance that we fight for, and I have a family that will back me up and take care of me so that I can take care of my family. I went from the "why me's" to "why not me". I can learn and take whatever it is I get from this and use that to be of service.

I never set out to be an officer but then I was asked to take on the health and welfare job at Local 4. I picked the wrong year because we went straight into COVID. I had to do contact tracing and on top of learning a new job. It was a lot. There was so much to learn; there's no way that you could be prepared for a job like this—it's all learning on the job. You've got to embrace looking like an idiot and asking any question possible and then just not giving up.

If you looked at my credentials and told me that I could help people with their health benefits I would have said "No, that's not me". But I think it was important that somebody believed in me, set me in there, and then didn't give up. That makes me think that anybody can do it. That can be an empowering idea. We should be promoting the idea that anyone can fulfill these roles in our union. The message should be: you can do it and we will help you succeed. Because together we are better. Knowing when to step back is equally as important as knowing when to step up. We can become overly dependent on certain people who have been in positions for a long period. That becomes a hurdle because people are scared that they won't do a good job. But I think that that makes you a better person for the position. If you are worried about doing a good job, you're probably going to work hard to do it.







**77th Convention:** Local 6 held its 77th Annual Convention at their hall in Oakland on March 23. The convention discussed the impact of automation on the warehouse division and gave updates on recent an ongoing contract negotiations for Local 6 shops.

# Stronger Together



## TRANSITIONS

**NEW PENSIONERS:**

**Local 8:** Lloyd F. Green; Karen A. Maunu; **Local 13:** Selena H. Amaro; Mitchel P. Collins; Phu Trong Dang; Johnny R. Graham; Mark A. Lomeli; Anthony P. Mardesich; Carlos H. Mercado; Daniel E. Moren; Richard W. Nelson; Rick J. Nuno; John G. Ollie; Marina M. Papoff; Pedro E. Salazar; Martin P. Skram; Paul S. Wilms; John Zimmerman; **Local 19:** Michael J. Callanan; Anthony Clay Sr.; Kara A. Fatty; Larry L. McNabb; David A. Williams; **Local 21:** Greg A. Lindemann; Craig A. Vandenberg; **Local 23:** Scott M. Anderson; Gregory N. Griffin; Rick W. Harris; **Local 29:** Ruben Huerta; **Local 34:** Armando D. Corregedor; **Local 52:** Felbert Barnett Jr.; **Local 63:** Alan B. Codd; George M. Rajevich; Anthony Sigala; **Local 94:** Richard R. Harriett;

**DECEASED PENSIONERS:**

**Local 8:** Randy A. Rich; **Local 10:** Amile Ashley; John H. Ellis; James N. Gaines; Paul W. Roy; Robert Shipp; Gabriel F. Zaragoza; **Local 13:** David A. Lomeli; Wade E. Orange; **Local 19:** Paul F. Barracliffe; Ronald B. Ware; **Local 21:** Larry M. Larson; **Local 26:** Jose E. Angulo;

Ernestine Seay; **Local 46:** Donato C. Pizano; **Local 50:** Lolland L. Schork; **Local 63:** Richard A. Brusick; Joan F. Young; **Local 91:** Eddie J. Bell; **Local 92:** Hugh A. Bolton; Eugene R. King; **Local 94:** Roy A Brewer; **Local 98:** Ted E Bell;

**DECEASED ACTIVE MEMBERS**

**Local 10:** Damar G. Maxey; **Local 13:** Anthony H. Chapman; Anthony J. Contreras; Victor M. Lopez;

**DECEASED SURVIVORS:**

**Local 4:** Helen K. Bair; **Local 8:** Marie Marquardt; Bernice Martin; Jeanne M. Young; **Local 10:** Mayfield; Lenora E. **Local 13:** Rachel Beiley; Gloria T. Brooks-Mathieu; Paz B. Lopez; Gail L. McDougall-Diaz; Lucille Nelson; Karen R. Patterson; Deborah A. Perry; Brenda Townsell; Lilia T. Valdez; **Local 19:** Alice Beighley; **Local 21:** Janette L. Pratt; **Local 23:** Phyllis Winter; **Local 29:** Wilma Perez; **Local 32:** Jodi R. Eggert; Sharon Jeschke; **Local 54:** Alice J. Mountjoy; **Local 63:** Delores R. Sharpe; **Local 94:** Christina A. Bird; Geraldine A. Buchanan; Alice M. Jacobson; Norma Orseth; Consuelo Salcido;

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