



THE DISPATCHER

"AN INJURY TO ONE IS AN INJURY TO ALL"

OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER OF THE INTERNATIONAL LONGSHORE & WAREHOUSE UNION

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Photo courtesy of the Maritime Union of Australia

More than 100 Indigenous unionists and allies from the U.S., Canada, New Zealand, and Australia gathered together in Sydney, Australia for the historic International First Nations Maritime Workers Conference.

MUA hosts historic International First Nations Maritime Workers Conference

Report on the global gathering for Indigenous workers' rights, Sydney, Australia

In July, the Maritime Union of Australia (MUA) hosted the historic International First Nations Maritime Workers Conference in Sydney, Australia. The event brought together over 100 Indigenous unionists and allies from Chile, Hawai'i, Canada, the Mainland U.S., New Zealand, and across Australia.

Delegates gathered to share lived experiences of colonization, economic exclusion, workplace racism, and political resistance—reinforcing global solidarity in the fight for Indigenous rights and worker justice.

Indigenous leader Thomas Mayo and MUA National Secretary Paddy Crumlin opened the conference by acknowledging their deep inspiration from the ILWU's 39th Convention, themed "Honour the Past, Invest in Our Future," held in Vancouver, B.C., June 17–21, 2024.

Honouring the union–Indigenous alliance

A keynote led by Professor Padraig Gibson and Thomas Mayo highlighted the long-standing alliance between maritime unions and Indigenous peoples. Stories of resistance and solidarity were brought to life and will be developed into a graphic education tool for union members.

Key speakers included:

- Tony McAvoy, Australia's first Indigenous Senior Counsel, who gave an overview of native title and land rights legislation.

- Joe Williams, a former South Sydney Rabbitohs and champion boxer, who spoke on mental health advocacy, intergenerational trauma, and the need for early intervention.

Delegates also participated in a cultural tour hosted by the La Perouse Aboriginal community, and enjoyed powerful Indigenous performances that reinforced international Indigenous unity, including an inspiring

performance from ILWU International Vice President (Hawai'i) Brandon Wolff and ILWU Hawai'i delegation members Matthew Coleman, Brenson Wailehua, and Nepo Toafiaoalii Leutu Jr (Sunny).

A highlight was the presence of Auntie Rhonda Dixon, daughter of the legendary MUA wharfie and land rights activist Chicka Dixon. Her words, alongside Elder Kevin Tory, grounded the gathering in a rich cultural and political legacy.

Women in the Workplace: Breaking Barriers

The MUA National Women's Committee, reported by Angie Moore, proudly joined the conference and participated in a dynamic Day 2 session titled "Women in the Workplace – Breaking Barriers."

Led by Vicky Morta, the MUA's first woman Indigenous bosun, the panel included:

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IEB meets in Seattle

Board approves two new Statements of Policy

The ILWU's International Executive Board met in Seattle, WA, from August 13-15. The Executive Board meetings now rotate across different regions as part of the Titled Officers' efforts to make it easier for members to observe the Board's work, promote transparency, and re-engage the membership.

Over the three-day meeting, more than 60 rank-and-file members attended, including members from Locals 5, 13, 19, 22, 52, 100, the American Radio Association, and the Hawai'i Longshore Division-Local 142.

In addition to the trustees' report, officers' reports, and local area and committee reports, the Board debated and passed two new statements of policy introduced by the Programs and Policies Committee.

Legislative report

The legislative report was presented by Senior Policy Advisor Alexa Jurczak, who emphasized the union's efforts to advocate for the political interests of ILWU members across various regions and divisions. She discussed the impact the "One Big Beautiful Bill Act" (OBBBA) will have on workers, including cuts to SNAP and Medicaid. The OBBBA is projected to significantly increase the budget deficit, which will trigger



The International Executive Board met in Seattle August 13-14. IEB meetings will rotate through different regions to allow more members to sit in and observe the Executive Board at work.

mandatory Medicaid cuts starting in 2026, unless Congress adopts additional measures (See the July/August 2025 issue of the *Dispatcher*).

Jurczak also highlighted that the ILWU mobilized members

and pensioners to help remove a dangerous provision in the OBBBA that would have prevented states from enacting or enforcing laws related to artificial intelligence and automation.

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Statements of Policy adopted at the ILWU International Executive Board meeting August 13-15, 2025

ILWU Statement of Policy Opposing Anti-Worker Artificial Intelligence and Automation Technologies

The International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) strongly opposes the use of artificial intelligence (AI) and automation technologies to surveil, discipline, and displace workers. We demand strict oversight and a voice in how these new technologies are implemented in our workplaces. Strong regulation is needed at the local, state, and federal levels to protect our jobs, our economy, and our national security from the risks posed by automation and AI.

Automation and AI will lead to mass layoffs

Our members – from hotel staff to crane operators to warehouse workers – are all too familiar with how employers use "new technology" as a smokescreen for reducing hours, degrading working conditions, and eliminating jobs. There is a lot of uncertainty over just how many jobs will be lost to automation and AI in the coming decades. Certain automation technologies, like self-checkout at grocery stores, or self-driving equipment, are already displacing workers in a wide array of industries. Automation technology can also make the jobs that are not automated more exhausting and punitive – for example, as warehouse technology and monitoring systems speed up the pace of work, warehouse workers are increasingly subjected to ever harsher working conditions, leading to injury and exhaustion. The use of automation and AI technologies to eliminate work for actual human beings must be opposed outright.

Serious questions remain over the safety and ethics of AI technologies

AI, automation, and other digital technologies open up our workplaces and communities to a huge number of safety and ethical concerns. There are major data privacy issues with many of the leading AI technologies, as well as national security concerns, particularly at our ports. AI systems that are trained on biased or discriminatory data end up exacerbating these biases, leading to unfair hiring, firing, and decision-making processes in the workplace. AI can create misleading and inaccurate photos, videos, and social media content that fuel division and distrust in our communities. Studies have also revealed the enormously destructive impact that AI has on the environment, as it uses vast amounts of water and electricity and puts immense pressure on the electric grid.

AI and automation present grave threats to the supply chain

We call for robust restrictions on AI, machine learning, and automation in port operations to safeguard security, ensure reliability, and maintain human-centered control. AI and automated infrastructure expose high-value supply chain targets to foreign infiltration and misuse for malicious intent. Reliance on AI produces errors that can lead to catastrophic mismanagement. Relinquishing control of our critical supply chains to AI for medical, industrial, agricultural, energy, and military logistics puts our lives and our economy at risk. Most cargo handling equipment is foreign manufactured, with loosely regulated software creating an enormous security threat. These technologies should only be introduced where there are strong safeguards, including affirmative human oversight, cybersecurity, and transparent audits.

Strong regulation is critical to ensure that these new advances in technology are used to assist – not displace – workers

These emerging AI and automation technologies must be regulated to ensure they are only used to make work more productive and safer, not to surveil, discipline, or displace workers. Absent proper regulation, mass layoffs due to AI lead to falling tax revenue, setting off a catastrophic spiral of reduced government funding for essential social programs and services, at a time when more workers may need government support than ever before. Today's technology companies are some of the wealthiest companies in history – there is more than enough money to ensure that workers do not bear the brunt of these technological changes.

This is common sense, not a partisan or political issue. The ILWU recognizes that all workplaces must adapt to technological change – our Union has been bargaining over the impact of new technologies in our workplaces for generations. We are demanding a seat at the table in negotiating how automation and AI impact our membership and that adequate safeguards be put in place so that these new technologies work with our members and all working people.

ILWU Statement of Policy Condemning Attacks on Migrants

The International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) unequivocally condemns attacks on migrants by the federal government and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). Ongoing federal immigration raids across our country are brutal and destructive actions designed to terrorize and destabilize migrant communities — not to keep our country safe. The ILWU stands in solidarity with all migrant workers and calls on the labor movement to stand up, once more, against these often violent, unnecessary escalations.

Recent immigration raids are unjustly targeting workers

Since January 2025, federal immigration raids have increased in magnitude, targeting migrants at schools, workplaces, and even churches. Contrary to the current administration's claims that the focus is on migrants with criminal records, the majority of the nearly 100,000 people detained by ICE since January have no criminal convictions. Tens of thousands of hard-working community members, many of whom have lived in the United States for decades, are having their lives turned upside down — just trying to meet White House advisor Stephen Miller's alleged quota of "3,000 arrests a day." We do not support a national policy that destroys families, destabilizes our communities, and does nothing to make anyone safer.

Everyone's civil rights are threatened by this extreme federal overreach — not just migrants

The federal government's unprecedented actions in Los Angeles, throughout Southern California, and across the country pose severe threats to everyone's civil liberties. Deploying National Guard troops to Los Angeles was a dangerous escalation of force designed to instill fear and stifle dissent. The right to peaceful protest is a bedrock of American democracy and must not be infringed on. Far-right immigration policies proposed in Project 2025 (a political initiative with close ties to the current administration), such as an intensified nationwide deportation machine, the expansion of migrant detention centers, and a harsh crackdown on asylum seekers, are quickly becoming our reality. People are being snatched off the street by unidentified and/or masked ICE agents, denied due process, and sometimes deported to countries they have never even been to. These actions are an assault on basic civil and human rights and an affront to rights afforded by the United States Constitution. The current administration's statements and actions resemble the fascist regimes of Europe in the 1930s.

Aggressive, reckless immigration enforcement is a wedge used to divide workers and weaken our collective power

Anti-migrant rhetoric and policies turn struggling U.S.-born workers against their migrant neighbors, rather than against the employers who exploit workers and keep wages low. ILWU's Third Guiding Principle states, "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," and our Fourth Principle states, "To help any worker in distress must be a daily guide in the life of every trade union and its individual members. Labor solidarity means just that."

Honoring our Guiding Principles means opposing any actions or rhetoric that pit workers — no matter where they were born — against each other. Any attack on migrants is an attack on the working class. We stand in solidarity with migrant communities and workers across this country in the face of these escalating acts and call on our union brothers, sisters, and siblings to mobilize in defense of our fellow workers. We also call for bipartisan federal legislation to create a fair, humane, and functional immigration policy that protects human rights. An injury to one is an injury to all.

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‘Workers over billionaires’: Thousands march in SoCal Labor Day event

46th annual Los Angeles/Long Beach Harbor Labor Coalition’s Labor Day Parade breaks records



Local 94 President Danny Miranda and Local 13 President Gary Herrera marching at the LA/Long Beach Harbor Labor Coalition’s Labor Day Parade through Wilmington. This year’s turnout surpassed expectations with thousands of union members coming together to show their strength and unity despite unprecedented attacks on workers’ rights.

With unions under increased attack from the federal government, thousands of union members came together to honor labor and voice their opposition to the hostile policies of the Trump administration targeting workers’ rights, busting federal labor unions, and mass arrests of migrant workers. Members from every ILWU local in Southern California were joined by union teachers, actors, carpenters, iron-workers, stagehands, nurses, public employees, and others were among the 25 unions that marched in the parade.

The Harbor Labor Coalition that organizes the annual events was co-founded by Local 26 President Luisa Gratz, along with then-newly elected Local 13 Executive Board member Dave Arian, Regional Coordinator for the Inlandboatmen’s Union David O’Day, and Diane Middleton.

The event drew local, state, and national labor leaders, including AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler, California Federation of Labor Unions President Lorena Gonzalez, Los Angeles County Federation of Labor President Yvonne Wheeler, and David Huerta, President of SEIU California.

Celebrating workers

Labor Day is celebrated on the first Monday of September in both the U.S. and Canada to recognize workers. The holiday was created as an alternative to the more widely celebrated International Workers’ Day, which is observed on May 1. May Day more explicitly centers a celebration of worker power and solidarity compared to the U.S. holiday, which is largely marked by picnics for most Americans. However, both holidays share the same American roots, stemming from the fight nearly 150 years ago when workers in the United States struggled to gain more control over their time from employers. The fight for the eight-hour workday united native-born

and immigrant workers, who typically worked 10-hour days, six days a week.

Fueling the marchers

The day started at 7:30 a.m. at the Longshoremen’s Memorial Hall with a pancake breakfast sponsored by the Southern California Pensioners Club that fed more than 1,500 people. The breakfast was made possible by many volunteers, including Auxiliary 8, ILWU members, and pensioners. Their work and generosity make the breakfast happen every year.

During breakfast, elected officials and candidates at the federal, state, and local levels had a chance to briefly address the crowd before proceeding to the assembly point for the Labor Day parade. Among the speakers was Local 13 member Vivian Malauulu, who is running for a seat on the Long Beach City Council.

Prop 50

Several speakers emphasized the importance of supporting California’s Proposition 50, also known as the “Election Rigging Response Act.” The measure, which will appear on the ballot in the November 4 special election, permits temporary modifications to redistricting maps in response to Texas’s partisan congressional redistricting.

The ILWU Southern California District Council endorsed Prop 50 at a special-called meeting on September 4. SCDC President Mickey Chavez stated that passing Prop 50 is crucial to giving workers a fighting chance in the 2026 congressional elections. “It’s important that we elect a House majority that is willing to be a check against the current administration that is attacking the rights of organized and unorganized workers,” Chavez said.

Press event

Before the parade began, labor leaders held a press conference for local and national media. They spoke out against attacks on collective bargaining rights, job losses due to artificial intelligence and automation, and the arrests of migrant workers by masked federal agents.

Liz Shuler expressed solidarity with the workers in Los Angeles being arrested by ICE and highlighted the nationwide struggle of workers across the country to fight for labor rights. “I wanted to be here today because the Trump administration has made this ground zero for their attacks on working people,” said Shuler, “and we’re not going to stand for it.”

Lorena Gonzalez emphasized that it has been unions pushing back against the Trump Administration. She said that the labor movement will not allow the “bully in the White House” to come after their jobs or workers, adding that it will be the working class, not politicians, who will lead the fight to save our democracy.

Local 13 President Gary Herrera rallied workers to take a stand against attacks on labor by the government and billionaires. He called attention to the need for a political party that represents the interests of the working class.

“Labor is under attack, but we are not going to back down from anybody,” Herrera said. “They are trying to get rid of our jobs through AI and automation. They want to eliminate our collective bargaining agreements. California is the fourth-largest economy in the world because of labor. Those billionaires at home right now, they’ve got it good, but they don’t know what’s coming. We know how to organize and how to fight. Workers must unify. There’s only one party we need: the Labor Party! We build, we unite, and we make lives better.”

Pensioners lead the way

The Southern California pensioners rode on a flatbed truck and tossed candy to the hundreds of children and families who lined Avalon Blvd. to watch the parade. Behind them marched hundreds of union members, motorcycle clubs, marching bands, classic cars, and low-riders. The march ended in Wilmington’s Banning Park, where marchers were treated to hot dogs, cold sodas, water, and popsicles as they streamed into the park.

In addition to free beverages, hot dogs, and live music, there were

numerous vendor booths from unions, labor organizations, and community groups, including the Southern California District Council and the Federated Auxiliaries. The ILWU hosted a dedicated children’s area featuring face painting, a puppet show, and tasty snacks.

At the picnic, scores of national, state, and local elected officials were present and were briefly introduced at the start of the event by Los Angeles City Councilmember Tim McCosker, who represents the Council’s 15th District, which includes the harbor area. Politicians were recognized but were not permitted to engage in electioneering at the event, such as giving campaign speeches or distributing literature.

Urgency felt

Many who marched in the parade felt this year’s event was particularly meaningful given the scope and scale of attacks on workers and unions. “As our rights and freedoms are being challenged, it is more important now than ever that we stand up and fight for what we believe is the right thing to do,” said Local 56 member Nico Meeker. “We have to really get back to the basics, get back to the community, and stick to our values. We’re the backbone of this country, and if they want our freedoms, they’re going to have to come and take them out of our cold, dead, American, union hands.”

Strong support for unions

The annual Gallup opinion poll, which measures public support for labor unions, found that backing for unions remains strong. The poll showed that 68% of U.S. adults approve of labor unions. This figure is the same as last year’s and marks the fifth consecutive year that approval of organized labor has been in the 67% to 71% range, a level last seen in the late 1950s and early 1960s.

The poll also revealed a continued partisan divide in union support, with 90% of Democrats, 69% of independents, and 41% of Republicans expressing approval for unions. While all three groups have shown increased support for unions compared to 2016, Republican support has decreased since reaching a peak of 56% in 2022.



Local 13 member Vivian Malauulu was among the speakers at the morning pancake breakfast sponsored by the SoCal Pensioners. She is running for a seat on the Long Beach City Council to be a voice for labor.

Standing the test of time on life, longevity

For most people, turning 100 is a rare milestone. But within the ILWU, centenarians are not so uncommon. Their lives, shaped by hard work and union solidarity, speak volumes about the power of long-term and collective commitment.

This summer, *The Dispatcher* spoke with three remarkable individuals over the age of 100—Sadie Williams (101), Willie Dixon (106), and Eunice McAvoy (109)—to document their stories and the role the ILWU played in their lives. These interviews are part of an ongoing effort to honor the ILWU Coast Longshore Division’s oldest surviving members and surviving spouses. Each story is unique, but the themes are shared: lifelong stability, strong community ties, and a deep appreciation for the pension and health care benefits the union has provided across generations. In a country where only 0.03% of the population reaches age 100, the ILWU community stands out—not just for the longevity of its members, but for the quality of life the union has helped secure long after retirement. These centenarians and their lived experience of labor history offer a rare and invaluable perspective on the long-term impact of union solidarity.



Sadie Williams

At 101, Sadie Williams embodies the quiet strength and resilience that defined both her life and her partnership with Cleophas (“Bill”) Williams, the first Black president of ILWU Local 10. Sadie was born on February 25, 1924, in Houston, Texas, where her parents owned a restaurant on the docks - an early bridge between her family and longshore workers. Sadie grew up in a close-knit Black community, graduating from Hughes Business College before relocating to San Francisco to join her sister and brother-in-law, who worked in the shipyards. She described the college as her first real interaction with white people and remembers getting along well with everyone, even in segregated times. Shortly thereafter she began her first job at Golden State Insurance Company.

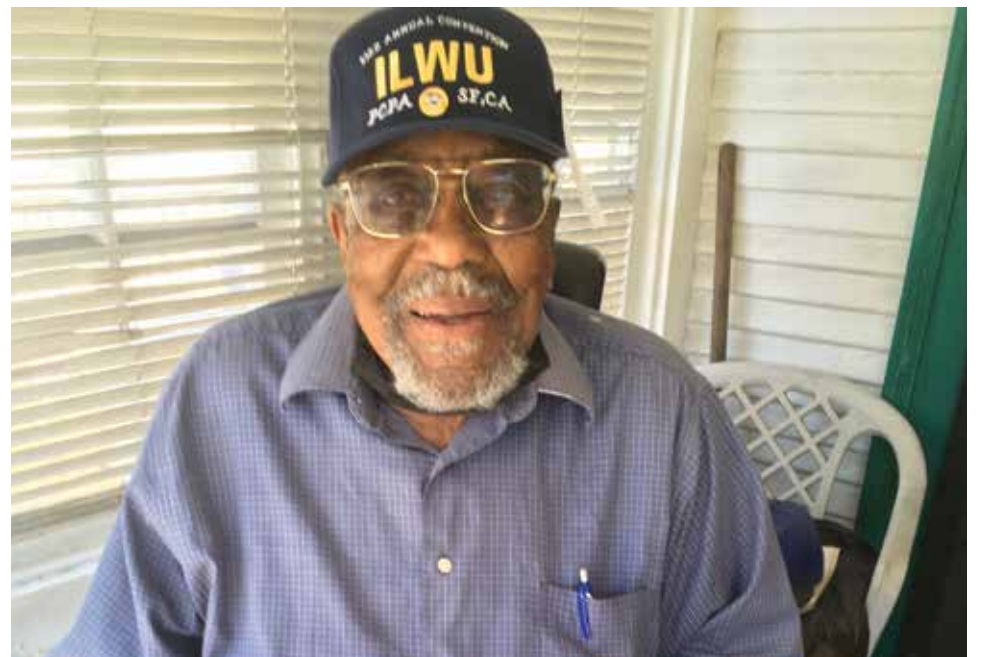
She first met Cleophas at the funeral of her first husband. Two years later, in the early 1960s, Cleophas reconnected with her. That kindness marked the beginning of a marriage that spanned half a century, built on mutual support and deep commitment to the ILWU. Cleophas was a longshoreman and already an involved member of ILWU Local 10 when they first began dating. He was close to the ILWU’s leadership and decided to run for office. During Cleophas’s campaign nights, Sadie supported him unwaveringly. She would accompany him to visit members and often wait in the car while he spoke with them. “Most of the men liked me,” she reflected, “and that helped him gain support.” Cleophas would eventually be elected ILWU Local 10 President in 1967 where he served until 1981, guiding what was considered as one of the country’s most progressive and militant unions.

Their shared life with the union took them to many ILWU conventions and caucuses, countless civic events, and several countries around the world including Australia and New Zealand. Sadie rubbed elbows with political leaders like Willie Brown and George Moscone and traveled with Cleophas across the Bay Area—from Oakland to Sacramento—as he worked to connect the union with broader communities. Through these gatherings, they became part of San Francisco’s civic fabric, advocating for racial equity, social justice, and union solidarity. But leadership came with turmoil. During turbulent times, Cleophas’s office was targeted. Through it all, Sadie remained calm and resolute while acknowledging the dangers of their position. Cleophas was also the ILWU Local 10 President through ILWU’s historic and longest strike that took place 1971-1972, a challenging time requiring resolve, support, and determination. Sadie’s strength and genuine warmth acted as a grounding presence to help Cleophas navigate

challenging moments within the union and community. She did not let him lose his determination and vision.

The ILWU’s impact on Sadie’s life extended beyond activism. The union’s transformative benefits provided financial stability, comprehensive health care, and peace of mind. Even now, at 101, Sadie receives medical benefits through the union. “At no cost. It’s a blessing,” she proudly shares, underscoring how deeply such support shaped her entire family’s well-being. Her perspective on race and labor remains sharp. Sadie recounted ILWU’s reputation in her community as “the best labor job you could get,” including equitable wages and opportunities at a time when such access was rare for Black families.

Today, the pension benefits that Sadie still receives as a surviving spouse underscore her belief that “being part of this union has been a benefit and a blessing. It’s civic-minded, it has people in mind.”



Willie Dixon

Similar to Sadie’s experience with the ILWU, Willie Dixon, at 106 years old, also reflects on the union’s civil minded impact. However, for him, the impact was multi-generational. His life is marked by labor, family, and resilience, and tells the story of a man shaped by hard work and sustained by union solidarity.

Willie began working at just nine years old. By 1942, he had joined ILWU Local 6 and eventually became a member of ILWU Local 10. The work was tough and often dangerous, including loading ships, moving freight, and driving forklifts in bustling warehouses.

Union benefits provided critical security for his growing family, allowing Willie and his wife to raise children free from the instability that too often defines life for working families. “We never had to go without”, he reflected with gratitude. This security became especially evident during personal hardships like two devastating house fires and physical injuries, including when he fractured ribs. Amid these hardships, the union’s medical and dental coverage ensured his family’s stability and recovery, while ensuring he could come back to work when he had healed.

For Willie, the ILWU also offered a great sense of community. He warmly recalled union-sponsored barbecues and picnics that strengthened the sense of pride that comes from being a member of the union. Willie’s union connection extended to his family; he proudly passed down skills, like forklift operation, to his children, emphasizing pride in workmanship.

me: Centenarians reflect ty, and the ILWU

“The ILWU's model suggests that when workers are truly cared for, physically, emotionally, and financially, they do not just survive. They thrive. And they pass on values of strength, community, and intergenerational support that outlast any paycheck. When organizations prioritize their people's well-being, everyone wins, not just economically, but in ways profoundly human, lasting generations.”

Reflecting on his life, Willie said, “I’ve been blessed. I can meet my obligations and take care of my family.” His words resonate deeply, exemplifying the idea that support and dignity in work are foundational to both happiness and longevity.



From left to right: Viviana Williams, Eunice McAvoy, and Oregon Area Welfare Director Martha Hendricks.

Eunice McAvoy

At 109 years old, Eunice McAvoy is the oldest surviving spouse on the ILWU’s pensioner plan. She speaks clearly and thoughtfully, reflecting on a life shaped by hard work, family, and the quiet support of a union that helped sustain her family for decades and through multiple generations.

Eunice first met her husband, Lester, during a summer break while she was working at a riverside restaurant in Oregon. He was a commercial fisherman supplying crawfish to local eateries. By the end of the summer, they decided to get married and traveled east, where Lester had grown up in Chicago, before eventually returning to the West Coast, which was home to Eunice.

Though Lester arrived to the West Coast without a job, Eunice’s family helped him get his start. Eunice’s Uncle, George Holzapful, worked on the waterfront and put in a word for Lester. Soon after, Lester began his long career as a longshoreman at ILWU Local 8. “He was always anxious to work,” Eunice said. “And he was good at it.”

Eunice helped support her family by substitute teaching while raising two sons, Steve and Richard, and a daughter, Kathi. The family lived with her parents in those early years, pooling resources and helping one another. “We didn’t have a place of our own at first,” she said. “So I wanted to help them too.”

For Eunice, the union’s healthcare benefits were essential. “Especially with two rough boys, there were always doctor bills,” she laughed. “But they were taken care of, and I was very thankful.” After Lester passed, the union continued to support her by providing health benefits and a pension to her as a surviving spouse. “They’ve taken care of me very well. I have no complaints.”

Her gratitude is not just about the material benefits. The ILWU’s presence was woven into the fabric of her life—quiet but constant. While Eunice herself did not attend many union events beyond the annual Fourth of July picnic, Lester participated in strikes and attended union meetings. During one strike, he took up side jobs to keep things afloat. That spirit of hard work was passed down. Their son Steve joined Lester on the waterfront after high school, making theirs, like so many others, a multi-generational ILWU family.

After her children were grown, Eunice devoted herself to painting. “I did oils for years,” she said, pointing to the beautiful canvases of landscapes that line her home. She even installed a kiln in her garage to make ceramics

and passed on her love of art to her daughter, who used tile painting in home remodels.

When asked about the secret to her longevity, Eunice did not credit diet, exercise, or even genetics. “That’s strictly the Lord’s work,” she said. “I don’t baby myself. I’m determined to keep going as long as He wants me here.” She still vividly remembers her childhood on a 120-acre homestead in Oregon—chopping wood, climbing trees, and caring for animals. “I did as much on the ranch as any other person.”

In her more recent years, one of Eunice and Lester’s greatest joys was traveling the country in a motorhome. Her favorite stop? The canyons—“just breathtaking,” she recalled. Eunice and Lester were able to enjoy retirement and travel together in large part because of the pension benefits Lester received, allowing him to retire close to age 65, without concern for living expenses and with the ability to explore the United States.

As our visit ended, Eunice hesitated about having her photo taken. “I didn’t have any part of it,” she said modestly, referring to the union. But that could not be further from the truth. Through decades of raising a family, supporting her husband, taking on additional work when needed, and remaining fiercely independent into her now eleventh decade, Eunice embodies the quiet, steady power behind so many of the union worker who helped build this union in its early days—those who kept things running at home, who made sure there was food on the table, and who believed in building something better for the next generation.

She may not have stood on the picket line, but she stood beside a man who did. And in doing so, she became part of the fabric of this union.

Eunice, we thank you.

Reflections on union care and longevity

Each centenarian shared a distinct story, yet common threads were clear. For Sadie, Willie, and Eunice, the ILWU was more than employment for them or their spouse; it was foundational to their well-being. From their stories and reflections, it is apparent that their quality of life improved because their basic needs—healthcare, pensions, family security—were consistently met. Their long and healthy lives demonstrate that reducing workers’ anxiety through meaningful support creates happier, healthier lives.

The connection between union-backed security and longevity felt clear. When these centenarians spoke about reaching their extraordinary ages, they never mentioned special diets or exercise regimens. Instead, they highlighted security, community, and dignity. ILWU’s long-term commitment to its members removed the fear of financial hardship, enabling these families to flourish across generations.

As a high school student, my understanding of labor has often been centered on efficiency, productivity, or economic metrics. But these interviews reframed the conversation for me: What if we measured the success of a workplace not just by output, but by how well it enables its people to live long, meaningful lives?

The ILWU's model suggests that when workers are truly cared for, physically, emotionally, and financially, they do not just survive. They thrive. They live to 101, 106, 109. And they pass on values of strength, community, and intergenerational support that outlast any paycheck. When organizations prioritize their people’s well-being, everyone wins, not just economically, but in ways profoundly human, lasting generations. Sadie, Willie, and Eunice are living testaments to that truth. Perhaps the secret to their remarkable longevity is simpler than we imagined: the peace of mind and dignity provided by a community and a union that genuinely cares.

– Viviana Williams

Viviana Williams is a senior at South Pasadena High School with a strong interest in labor relations and organizational studies. Outside the classroom, she is actively involved in musical theater and serves on the yearbook staff, where she combines creativity with leadership. Viviana is passionate about exploring how organizations function and how collective action can shape more equitable workplaces.

Local 34 member Derrick Muhammad appointed to Oakland Port Commission

Oakland Mayor Barbara Lee appointed Local 34 member Derrick Muhammad to the Oakland Port Commission. His appointment was unanimously confirmed by the City Council on July 1.

Muhammad is the first ILWU member to be appointed to the Oakland Port Commission.

“This is the first time a representative of the people who actually work at the port has been on the Port Commission,” said Mayor Lee. The Port of Oakland serves as a regional economic engine, playing a critical role in job creation,

international trade, and regional development.

The Port Commission oversees the Oakland Airport, the Oakland Seaport, and nearly 20 miles of waterfront property, extending from West Oakland to East Oakland.

Muhammad has been an ILWU member for more than 21 years, with 18.5 years as a member of Local 10 before transferring to Local 34.

“I take great pride in being a longshoreman and coming through the ranks at Local 10, where I served as Business Agent and Secretary-Treasurer and worked hard to advance the ILWU

and build relationships in the West Oakland community,” he said.

“The ILWU is the largest maritime organization at the seaport, and it is long overdue that we have representation on the Port Commission. I bring an important first-hand perspective to the commission that will benefit the Port and the citizens of Oakland,” Muhammad said. “During my confirmation process, I spoke about the underutilized assets in the port. There are several berths that aren’t being used for industrial purposes. My goal is to attract companies to increase business and create more work opportunities in the port.”



Newly appointed Oakland Port Commissioner and Local 34 member Derrick Muhammad.

From grassroots to the International—the labor struggle is the migrant struggle

Local 5 President Benjamin Ficklin shares their perspective on the ‘Statement of Policy Condemning Attacks on Migrants’

On August 14, the members of the ILWU’s International Executive Board (IEB) voted unanimously in support of a Statement of Policy titled “Condemning Recent Attacks on Migrants.”

The statement directly calls on members of the ILWU—and the whole of the labor movement—to mobilize in solidarity with migrant communities. “Condemning Recent Attacks on

Migrants” should embolden workers across the ILWU to bargain for sanctuary policies in their contracts, mandating our bosses never cooperate with Immigration & Customs Enforcement (ICE). (See page 2 for the full text of the statement). It should encourage us to look to migrant leadership for how we provide support in our local communities. This powerful pledge from the ILWU to migrant justice is a testament to the solidarity needed now to stop the rise of American fascism.

This Statement of Policy grew out of solidarity organizing done by members of Local 5. The Deportation Defense Coalition (DDC) is a Portland-based coalition organizing to advance the migrant justice movement in the face of worsening oppression. Rank-and-file members of Local 5 organize within various subcommittees of the DCC including the Rapid Response subcommittee & the Organized Labor subcommittee. This coalition work puts Local 5 members in active

collaboration with migrant leadership to develop a united front in community defense. It was in the Organized Labor subcommittee of the DDC where Local 5 organizers collaborated to draft sanctuary resolution language to be used by locals to set policies of never collaborating with ICE. This sanctuary resolution continues getting passed by unions across Oregon. In this same subcommittee organizers developed contract language forbidding bosses

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MUA hosts historic International First Nations Maritime Workers Conference

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• Fiona Mansell, Assistant National Secretary of the Maritime Union of New Zealand (MUNZ)

• Joulene Parent, Executive Member, ILWU Local 500

The discussion tackled systemic issues facing Indigenous women in the workplace:

- Pregnancy discrimination
- Weak return-to-work policies
- Harassment, violence, and unconscious bias

Speakers emphasized the importance of safe, culturally appropriate pathways to leadership. ILWU’s Joulene Parent reminded us: “Ask women—and ask again—where can I lift others up, and who can I bring along?”

The session ended with concrete proposals, including embedding women’s representation structurally across the labour movement.

Confronting Racism & Economic Exploitation

Workplace and institutional racism were core themes. Ashley Spowart and Robin Hajinoor of Broome Ports shared their experiences confronting systemic discrimination—with union backing.

MUA’s Thomas Mayo reiterated this commitment: “A resolution was carried to

call on all MUA officials and members to call out racism and to continue our vital work against systemic discrimination that holds Australia back.”

Delegates also condemned Black Cladding—the practice of corporations exploiting Indigenous partnerships to secure contracts without benefiting communities. The message was clear: Reconciliation must be Indigenous-led, transparent, and enforceable. This aligns with ILWU’s Ten Guiding Principles, especially #3: “Workers are indivisible... Discrimination is a weapon of the boss.”

Indigenous longshore workers: a legacy of resistance

ILWU Canada proudly presented on the rich history of Indigenous longshore workers, particularly from the Squamish, Musqueam, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations. In 1906, these workers formed IWW Local 526, known as the “Bows and Arrows.” The workers funded a political mission to England, where Chief Joe Capilano met King Edward VII to demand recognition of Indigenous land rights—an early, powerful act of international solidarity. Also highlighted was how ILWU Local 500 managed recent Indigenous hiring, receiving 30 applications for local Nations. It was arranged that

the Nations would host and the union would provide an orientation as well as union education. A pensioner from each Nation publicly drew names following the education.

ILWU Canada and ILWU Hawai‘i also sponsored the Squamish Nation Youth Pow Wow and, in the future, will be sponsoring the All Native Basketball Tournament—Canada’s largest Indigenous cultural event.

Local 500 also has a visual reminder of this rich legacy at the hiring hall, where Indigenous artwork now adorns the building. At the mural unveiling, Elder Larry Grant (Musqueam Nation) and longshore pensioner said: “It’ll probably go around the world that this country values its relationships with Indigenous workers on the waterfront.” MUA National Secretary Paddy Crumlin reaffirmed the MUA’s commitment to building a more inclusive, representative workforce. “The future of our industry must be built on equity and respect,” Crumlin told delegates. “That means ensuring First Nations workers are not only represented, but leading in their workplaces on the waterfront, at sea, and at the negotiating table.”

This directly aligns with ILWU Canada’s Resolution, R-18, from the ILWU’s 37th Convention:

“The ILWU goes on record in defense of Native and Indigenous people’s struggle throughout this country.” It is more than symbolic; it is a call to organize, to ensure our resolutions live on in action, not just archives.

Final reflections: Leadership, policy, and the path ahead

Canada’s labour-led approach to reconciliation—though still a work in progress—is ahead of many global peers. ILWU Canada’s commitment to Indigenous leadership, policies like R-18, and grassroots education are creating international ripple effects.

Local 400 Pensioner and past ITF Canada Inspector Peter Lehay, noted in an August 2023 Dispatcher article on HaiSea Marine, a partnership between the Haisla First Nation and Seaspan that began with Local 400 reconciliation efforts:

“We began by acknowledging that First Nations peoples were the West Coast’s first seafarers. We secured a change to the section of our union constitution governing shipping rules. We travelled to Kitamaat Village to meet with the Haisla Nation to consult on next steps in the process of reconciliation. All of this work began before Seaspan launched its own work

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From grassroots to the International—the labor struggle is the migrant struggle

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from collaboration with ICE. The language of “Condemning Recent Attacks on Migrants” pulls directly from this coalition work of Local 5 within the DDC. It’s testament to the possibilities of organized labor working with the leadership of impacted communities. With the IEB passing this statement of policy we exemplify how grassroots organizing grows local power into regional power into international power.

It’s not a platitude to claim that the migrant justice movement is imperative to the labor movement. After decades of U.S. military intervention into Latin America during the 20th century and the current US trade policies of economic isolation, many people across Latin America can’t find work that earns the bare minimum to survive in their homelands. It’s simply not available. They are faced with the impossible decision of either death by poverty or leaving home with a hope of finding work. In this way their migrations are forced. The longstanding anti-migrant rhetoric of both the Democrat and Republican parties obscures the reality of the migrant struggle being a labor issue by associating migrant personhood with criminality. This political misdirection is worsening under the rise of fascism, an ideology that depends on dehumanizing certain populations, blaming them for conditions created by an exploitative economic system. As “Condemning Recent Attacks on Migrants” reads, “Anti-migrant rhetoric and policies turn struggling U.S.-born workers against their migrant neighbors, rather than against the employers who exploit workers and keep wages low.” The statement of policy correctly positions

the migrant justice struggle as an essential part of the labor movement. Understanding this connection is vital to our own organizing. The final paragraph reads, “Honoring our Guiding Principles means opposing any actions or rhetoric that pit workers — no matter where they were born — against each other. Any attack on migrants is an attack on the working class.” Active solidarity amongst working people is imperative, both morally and tactically, as even we with the protection of a union will need support as fascism targets labor organizing. We must build coalitions now.

We of the ILWU must use this statement of policy as motivation to take action. A statement alone does nothing to protect communities or fight against fascism. The value of these words will only be as much as they have material impact. Use this Statement of Policy to ensure we are including sanctuary language in our contracts. We must go beyond our own negotiations to work alongside grassroots migrant leadership—for too long has the U.S. labor movement only organized as broadly as our next contract. At a time of worsening attacks on working people, we must see our labor organizing as part of an international effort to empower working class people. Now we must build coalitions—overcoming the false narratives that seek to divide us—to ensure our power as working people.

For sanctuary contract language or to discuss how we build solidarity within our movement, email me at president@ilwulocal5.com

– Benjamin McPherson Ficklin,
President of Local5

TRANSITIONS

NEW PENSIONERS:

Local 4: William G. Labath;
Local 10: Dave M. Christensen; Eric L. Davis; **Local 13:** Timothy Brinson; Michael Brown; Jeffrey D. Bulrice; Joseph Calise, Jr.; Samuel Christopher; Paul G. Gilmore; Richard B. Gomez; Bruce Magruder, III; Mitchell J. McDonald; Rebecca M. Nuno; Bob J. O’Connor; Troy D. Potts; Diana L. Pugliese; Tommy V. Pugliese; Tricia R. Rodich; Isabel C. Rodriguez; Johnny N. Synstelien; John A. Torres; Chuck Zaccaria; **Local 19:** Steven C. Cerna; Frank Santos, Jr.; Gary A. Schaner; Russell A. Shepherd; **Local 23:** Robert B. Ellis; William B. Gellner; Ronald J. Hakanson; Ramo A. Natalizio; **Local 34:** Ulysee P. Maurice; **Local 40:** Samuel A. Bickel; **Local 63:** Faye M. Fiamengo; Gilbert M. Gomez; Linda P. Moses; Laura E. Pribanick; Michael D. Simpson; **Local 94:** Brian E. Griswold;

DECEASED ACTIVE MEMBERS:

Local 13: John R. McLaughlin; Geraldine Pangelinan; Marvette T. Rogers;

DECEASED PENSIONERS:

Local 8: Henry E. Mc Dowell; Roger D. Phillips; **Local 10:** Joseph Hughes; Frank Lewis; Claude Spillard; **Local 12:** Sandy L. Meyers; **Local 13:** James R. Brickner; Kenneth C. Eaton; Leonard Graham, Jr.; Rogelio Mejia; Wayne R. Perrin; Maria C. Radakovic; Anthony G. Young; **Local 19:** Roman R. Javillonar; David A. Williams; **Local 21:** Gary K. Brown; **Local 23:** Michael R. Boespflug; Robert W. Wilson, Jr.; **Local 54:** Donald R. Huggins; **Local 63:** Rose Marie L. Alpine; Enrique Gonzalez, Jr.;

DECEASED SURVIVORS:

Local 4: Kay L. Hubbard; **Local 7:** Alice M. Simonsen; **Local 10:** Filomena Carrancho; **Local 13:** Edith E. Daniels; Rebecca Daser; Patti J. Fadell; Stacey A. Nitta; **Local 21:** Nadine Y. Cooper; Judy L. Grant; Shirley Mitchell; **Local 23:** Rella Morlan; Marjorie L. Snell; **Local 32:** Frances L. Ivelia; **Local 34:** Barbara F. Bodine; **Local 40:** Dolores Hedlund; **Local 52:** Debra A. Kilcup; **Local 54:** Ruby Hofer; **Local 63:** Rose Marie Alpine;

A Helping Hand...

...when you need it most. That’s what we’re all about. We are the representatives of the ILWU-sponsored recovery programs. We provide professional and confidential assistance to you and your family for alcoholism, drug abuse and other problems—and we’re just a phone call away.

ILWU LONGSHORE DIVISION

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ADRP—Oregon
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Portland, OR 97221
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ADRP—Washington
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ILWU CANADA

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John Felicella
3665 Kingsway, Ste 300
Vancouver, BC V5R 5WR
(604) 254-7911

MUA hosts historic International First Nations Maritime Workers Conference

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in the region — something all our members can forever be proud of.”

From the “Bows and Arrows” to the ILWU 39th Convention, our movement has proven that meaningful change requires:

- Political will
- Member education
- Policy that reflects our values

We often say: “Educate. Agitate. Organize.” This is more than a slogan—it is a responsibility to build power between conventions and to uplift Indigenous and marginalized workers.

Let’s keep building that path

together—with courage, with clarity, and with solidarity.

Waterfront workers have a rich, deep history—and an opportunity to move forward with progressive vision, practical policy, and real action. At the heart of this is engagement and leadership of the rank and file. Your voices, your experiences, and your decisions will continue to shape a stronger, more just future for all workers. Lastly, I would like to thank the Officers from the International and ILWU Canada for the opportunity to represent the ILWU at this historic conference.

– Joulene Parent, ILWU Local 500

Local 23, IBU endorse ITF Inspector Cyrus Donato for Port of Tacoma Commissioner

Cyrus Donato, Puget Sound ITF Inspector and member of the Inlandboatmen’s Union, will be on the November ballot for a seat on the Tacoma Port Commission. He has been endorsed by Local 23, the Inlandboatmen’s Union, the Pierce County Labor Council, and the Washington Education Association.

Donato, who is also a member of the US Coast Guard Reserve and a veteran of the US Coast Guard, brings extensive knowledge and experience in the maritime industry and a proven record of defending the rights of maritime workers. As an ITF Inspector,

he plays a vital role in combating labor exploitation, wage theft, and human trafficking in the maritime industry.

“I have spent my career at the intersection of labor rights, maritime regulation, and public service. I am running to ensure the Port increases cargo volume, creates living-wage union jobs, and modernizes infrastructure to remain globally competitive,” Donato said. “My grandfather died working on Tacoma’s docks, and I carry that legacy in my commitment to family wage safe jobs, fair labor, and public accountability.”

