

Honoring Howard Keylor's Contributions to ILWU and the Labor Movement

Whereas, ILWU longshore retiree Brother Howard Keylor is probably our union's last surviving World War II veteran whose experience in the battle of Okinawa made him a lifelong opponent of militarism, racism and imperialism who furthermore had opposed the nuclear bombing of and Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and

Whereas, Howard became a registered longshoreman in Stockton, later transferred to San Francisco where he opposed the 1971 proposed contract codifying the 9.43 steadyman system along with Brothers Herb Mills, Leo Robinson and a majority of the Local 10 membership. He participated in the picketing during the 1971-2 strike; and

Whereas, Howard who served on the Local 10 Executive Board was elected Caucus and Convention delegate for many years, participating in boycott protests against the bloody military dictatorships in Chile 1975 and 1978 and in El Salvador in 1980, refusing to load military cargo; and

Whereas, in October 1984 at the Local 10 membership meeting Howard made the motion calling on longshoremen to refuse to work the next ship from South Africa in solidarity with the anti-apartheid struggle there. This motion, amended by Brother Leo Robinson led to the historic 11-day ILWU strike against the Nedlloyd Kimberly which Nelson Mandela credited with re-igniting the U.S. anti-apartheid movement; and

Whereas, Howard supported other ILWU division struggles like Local 6 warehouse in the 1974 KNC strike in which ILWU Mexican American immigrant workers battled scabs and police, the 1974 and 2010 Boron miners' strike and in the 1987 Inlandboatmen's Union (IBU) strike in which Bay Area ports were shutdown and longshore and IBU workers militantly marched onto the Redwood City docks to stop the scabbing by other unions; and

Whereas, Howard worked to free America's most well-known political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal, helping to organize the 1999 march of 25,000 in San Francisco led by ILWU Local 10 and the Drill Team; and

Whereas, during the 2002 PMA lockout Local 10 used Howard's strike experience to help organize picketing, marches and rallies in the port of Oakland; and

Whereas, in 2010 and again in 2014 Howard was a key organizer of the pickets against the Zim ships, protesting the Israeli government's massacre of Palestinians in the Gaza war; and

Whereas, at age 90 in 2015 Howard participated in Local 10's "Stop Police Terror" action marching from the APL terminal to downtown Oakland to protest racist police killings; and

Finally, in 2017 Howard supported Local 10's anti-fascist action in San Francisco and the next day participated in the anti-fascist Berkeley demonstration, following the precedent of the successful call in 1980 by the Militant Caucus of the ILWU for a mass mobilization to stop George Lincoln Rockwell's American Nazi Party at San Francisco Civic Center;

Therefore it is fitting for Local 10 to honor our oldest living veteran of these ILWU struggles, Howard Keylor (#20447), with a plaque and an event on his 93rd birthday in December in the Henry Schmidt room honoring his contributions to the workers movement in the best tradition of the ILWU.