

# ACTION ITEM MEMO

Port of Tacoma Commission



Item No: 7A  
Meeting Date: 7/16/24

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**DATE:** July 8, 2024  
**TO:** Port of Tacoma Commission  
**FROM:** Eric Johnson, Executive Director  
Sponsor: Eric Johnson, Executive Director  
Project Manager: Eric Johnson, Executive Director  
**SUBJECT:** Proclamation 2024-05-PT: Honoring William E. Adams

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**A. ACTION REQUESTED**

Adoption of Proclamation 2024-05-PT: Honoring William E. Adams.

**Strategic Plan Initiative:** CC-1.

**B. BACKGROUND**

William E. Adams joined the International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 23 in Tacoma in 1978 and worked as a Longshoreman for 20 years in Tacoma before becoming a Marine Clerk. He became involved in the political life of his Local in 1998, serving on Local 23's Executive Board, as an elected delegate to the ILWU Longshore Division Caucus, a member of the International Executive Board in 2000, and a Trustee of the International Union. In 2018 the ILWU elected Adams as their seventh international president and the first black person in this role in its history.

Adams has also been active in the Tacoma community, producing "Celebrations of Black History and Labor" programs in Tacoma on seven separate occasions, featuring leading cultural and political figures including Danny Glover, Paul Robeson, Jr., Yolanda King (Martin Luther King Jr.'s daughter), hip hop icon Chuck D and Betty Shabazz (daughter of Malcolm X) and that these programs have received national attention and critical acclaim. He also has been the Executive Producer for several documentary films, including one about the life of African American writer Langston Hughes, "Hughes' Dream Harlem," and "The Black Composers," about African American film score composers.

Adams has received the City of Tacoma's Destiny Award and the Paul Robeson Peace and Justice Award from Mothers for Police Accountability in Seattle, Washington, for his service to the community.

Adams will retire this year after forty-five years of service to the working waterfront.

**C. SCOPE OF WORK**

The Port of Tacoma honors William E. Adams for his many years of service to the working waterfront, Tacoma and the surrounding community and the civil rights cause.

**D. ALTERNATIVE ANALYSIS**

- **Alternative 1:** Do not adopt the proclamation. Choosing not to recognize Willie Adams could send a signal that the Port does not recognize and support leaders of a strategic partner (i.e., ILWU).
- **Preferred alternative:** Adopt the Proclamation.