



IAAS Walks of Life 2010

John D. Baker

John D. Baker, assistant general organizer for the International Longshoremen's Association, AFL-CIO, is the chief negotiator for the union's contracts covering some 8,000 members at U.S. and Canadian Great Lakes ports. He previously served for 22 years as vice president on the ILA's Executive Council representing the Great Lakes region and Puerto Rico.

Baker worked his way up through the ranks of the ILA beginning his career as a longshoreman and later serving on a union organizing committee and on the Great Lakes District and International boards. He served for more than two decades as the president of the Great Lakes District Council.

He is secretary-treasurer of the Longshoremen's Local 1317. He serves as president of the Cleveland Port Council, Maritime Trades Department, and has served on the boards of the Great Lakes Maritime Task Force, Cleveland International Trade Center and the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum.

A lifelong resident of Greater Cleveland, Baker graduated from Collinwood High School and attended Cleveland State University and Cuyahoga Community College. He traces his Irish heritage back to County Cork and County Clare.

In 1980, he joined with ILA International President Teddy Gleason in forming the Irish American Labor Coalition, an organization dedicated to bringing fair economic and job hiring practices to Northern Ireland. Baker marched with Gleason in the New York City St. Patrick's Day Parade in 1984 when the latter served as grand marshal.

Baker also is a member of the D.C. Friends of Ireland and the Irish National Caucus. For more than two decades, he has advised several members of the U.S. House of Representatives, serving on the Congressional Committee on Irish Affairs.

He and his wife of 49 years, Louise, live in Willoughby. They have three children, Debbie, John Jr. and Michael, and four grandchildren.

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