



web: PortChicagoAlliance.org
email: info@PortChicagoAlliance.org
address: 15934 Hesperian Blvd. Ste 313
San Lorenzo, CA 94580

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 8, 2026

Former California Senator Roderick Wright to Receive the Inaugural Dr. Robert L. Allen Legacy Award

OAKLAND, CA, – The Port Chicago Alliance is proud to announce that former California Senator Roderick Wright will receive the inaugural **Dr. Robert L. Allen Legacy Award**, presented as part of the official California 175 commemorative event, “Mutiny at Port Chicago: Black Resistance and Redemption,” on Saturday, July 11, 2026, at the Oakland Museum of California.

Senator Wright is being recognized for his decades-long commitment to pursuing justice for the Port Chicago Sailors. Throughout the 1990s and beyond, he used his leadership in the California Legislature to bring renewed public attention to one of the nation’s most significant civil rights stories.

On February 23, 1998, Senator Wright joined Dr. Robert L. Allen and Sandra Evers-Manly in bringing surviving Port Chicago Sailors to the California State Capitol, where they were honored during the California Black Legislative Caucus’s Black History Month celebration. Opening the ceremony, Senator Wright declared:

“Today we recognize a national tragedy that occurred during World War II at Port Chicago, and what we do today is we call on the United States government to make it right for the gentlemen you see before you and the others who could not make the trip today.”

Later in the ceremony, he reminded those in attendance of the urgency of achieving justice while the surviving Sailors were still alive:

“Present with you this morning are living, breathing historical figures, and what’s more, they are still looking for that happy ending. And we don’t have that much time, so we’ve got to move.”

During the ceremony, Senator Wright presented Dr. Allen with a Certificate of Recognition on behalf of the California Legislature, honoring his scholarship, public service, and steadfast advocacy for the Port Chicago Sailors.

His advocacy continued into the following decade. In 2010, Senator Wright authored Senate Joint Resolution 21 (SJR 21), which urged Congress and the President of the United States to exonerate the Sailors who were unjustly blamed for the Port Chicago disaster and convicted of mutiny, and to rectify the mistreatment they suffered at the hands of the military. The resolution represented one of California's strongest official calls for federal action on behalf of the Port Chicago Sailors.

Senator Wright's efforts helped build the long arc of advocacy that ultimately led to the historic 2024 exoneration of the Port Chicago 50. His work stands as an important chapter in the decades-long movement to correct the record, honor the Sailors' courage, and affirm that their fight for justice was never forgotten.

About the Dr. Robert L. Allen Legacy Award

The Dr. Robert L. Allen Legacy Award honors individuals whose work has advanced the legacy of the Port Chicago Sailors through scholarship, advocacy, public service, or the pursuit of justice.

The award is named in honor of Robert L. Allen, the pioneering historian, author, educator, and civil rights advocate whose work fundamentally transformed public understanding of the Port Chicago story.

Dr. Allen is best known as the author of the landmark book *The Port Chicago Mutiny*, widely regarded as the definitive account of the Port Chicago disaster, the protest of the 258 Sailors, and the unjust court-martial of the 50 men convicted of mutiny. Through meticulous research, personal interviews, and powerful storytelling, he demonstrated that the Port Chicago disaster was not only the deadliest home-front tragedy of World War II, but also a defining chapter in the American struggle for civil rights. His work helped bring long-overdue national attention to the injustice faced by the 50 Sailors convicted of mutiny after refusing to return to the same dangerous working conditions that had claimed the lives of more than 320 men.

Beyond his scholarship, Dr. Allen devoted decades to working alongside surviving Sailors, their families, elected officials, attorneys, and community leaders to preserve their stories and pursue justice. Throughout the 1990s, he collaborated with leaders including former Senator Roderick Wright, Sandra Evers-Manly, and Reverend Diana McDaniel to reunite and honor the surviving Sailors, educate the public, and renew calls for official recognition and vindication.

Those decades of advocacy helped lay the foundation for the historic 2024 exoneration of the Port Chicago 50 by the Secretary of the Navy, correcting one of the most significant injustices in U.S. naval history.

By presenting the inaugural Dr. Robert L. Allen Legacy Award to former Senator Wright, the Port Chicago Alliance recognizes not only Wright's distinguished public service, but also the enduring legacy of Dr. Allen, whose research, leadership, and unwavering commitment ensured that the story of the Port Chicago Sailors would continue to inspire future generations in the ongoing pursuit of justice, equality, and historical truth.

Media Contact:

Yulie Padmore

Executive Director

Port Chicago Alliance

(925) 450-0070

info@portchicagoalliance.org