

COUNTY OF



ALLEGHENY

RICH FITZGERALD
COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Proclamation

WHEREAS, Duquesne University is hosting the fifth annual Rita M. McGinley Symposium on Thursday, October 24, 2014; in accordance with the symposium, the Eileen Zungolo Spirit of Service Award will be presented to Dr. Mary Esther Van Shura; and

WHEREAS, the Eileen Zungolo Spirit of Service Award is given each year to a person who demonstrates exceptional service to the citizens of Allegheny County and the City of Pittsburgh; recipients of the award are exemplars of social justice, acting alone or with others, to help vulnerable persons in our community; Mary Esther personifies those characteristics and more; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Zungolo, for whom the award is named, was a pioneer in educating undergraduate nursing students in the community; during her deanship, she reached out to Mary Esther for assistance in establishing nurse managed wellness centers in the City of Pittsburgh's centers for aging; this cooperative venture made community nursing a reality for students and brightened the days and improved the health of senior residents; and

WHEREAS, Mary Esther received her Doctor of Education degree from the University of Pittsburgh, a Master of Science degree in educational administration from the State University of New York at Albany, and a Bachelor of Science degree in elementary education from College Misericordia; she continues to be an active participant in the education community and is a professor at the University of Pittsburgh in its School of Education; and

WHEREAS, Mary Esther's passion for service has a long history; prior to her current position, she was the assistant director of the City of Pittsburgh's Department of Parks and Recreation where she was charged with fulfilling the goals of the administration related to the engagement of older adults; in her position, senior centers were better located and equipped, seniors became more engaged in the programming and decisions, and programs that partnered seniors with pre-schoolers were launched so they could learn from each other; and

WHEREAS, Mary Esther also served as director of the state office for U.S. Senator Harris Wofford; she remains active in local politics, has been a presidential election delegate for the last five elections, and is well-known for her energy and enthusiasm on behalf of candidates; and

WHEREAS, Mary Esther is the Director of Community Affairs for County Executive Rich Fitzgerald, and, in that role, is an advocate for minorities, the disability community, and older adults; she has also been actively involved in numerous initiatives and efforts of the administration including the Allegheny 365 Report, the Vision Team Reports (utilized as the Executive's transition documents), the 2014 Sunset Review of County Government, the Public Health Commission on Preventing Violence & Promoting Community Mental Health, and more; she is also actively engaged with the international and immigrant community; and

WHEREAS, a resident of Chatham Village in Mt. Washington, Mary Esther is also well-known for her involvement in her community – Chatham Village is a better place because of her involvement and engagement in the neighborhood that she calls home; and

WHEREAS, before working in government, Mary Esther also had a career in the non-profit sector as Director of Mental Retardation Services for Step-by-Step Inc. of Pittsburgh, and as an educator as an elementary school teacher in the Waverly Central Schools in New York; and

WHEREAS, Mary Esther also has a soft spot in her heart for the Little Sisters of the Poor in Pittsburgh, an organization that cared for and loved her mother as if she were family, and that continues to serve the elderly, contribute to the community and reveres the sanctity of human life and the uniqueness of each person; she is a frequent visitor to their home in Brighton Heights and is part of their family as well;

WHEREAS, perhaps most importantly, Mary Esther Van Shura is a friend; regardless of how you met or what social circle you are in, Mary Esther treats each and every person with humor, kindness, acceptance, honesty, support and caring; she shares in their joys and concerns, is giving, dependable, encouraging, nonjudgmental and loving.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that I, Allegheny County Executive Rich Fitzgerald, by virtue of the authority vested in me, do hereby congratulate Mary Esther Van Shura on being the 2014 recipient of the Eileen Zungolo Spirit of Service Award; I thank her for all that she has done on behalf of our community and residents and am grateful, and proud, that she is part of our team.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Seal of the County of Allegheny to be affixed this 23rd day of October, 2014.

Rich Fitzgerald

Rich Fitzgerald