

COUNTY OF



ALLEGHENY

RICH FITZGERALD  
COUNTY EXECUTIVE

## *Proclamation*

**WHEREAS**, *The Pathway to a More Inclusive Bench is being held on Wednesday, April 30, 2014 at the Rivers Club; this program is designed to recognize the individuals who have paved the way in making the judicial system more inclusive and subsequently will include a posthumous honor of the Honorable Sara Mathilde Soffel; and*

**WHEREAS**, *Judge Soffel was educated in the Pittsburgh Public Schools and was a graduate of Wellesley College; she taught at Schenley High School and Crafton High School, and also enrolled in the University of Pittsburgh Law School; and*

**WHEREAS**, *Judge Soffel was the first woman to receive her entire legal education at the University of Pittsburgh Law School and was the top student in the graduating class of 1916; this distinction normally carried with it a cash prize and a job on the faculty as an assistant instructor, however, she only received the cash prize; Governor John Fisher appointed her to the bench of the Allegheny County Courts in 1930 where she served until 1942; Judge Soffel was the first woman to serve as a judge in Allegheny County and was also the first female judge in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania; and*

**WHEREAS**, *after serving in the Allegheny County Courts, Judge Soffel served in the Court of Common Pleas of Allegheny County until 1962; during her tenure as judge, she was the first woman to join the Board of Trustees of the University of Pittsburgh; and*

**WHEREAS**, *Judge Soffel passed away in 1976 at the age of 89, but her impact on our community and Commonwealth will never be forgotten; she led the way to a more inclusive bench and her work as a legal pioneer lives on in all those who are still fighting for inclusion.*

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** *that I, Allegheny County Executive Rich Fitzgerald, by virtue of the authority vested in me, do hereby commend the organizers of The Pathway to a More Inclusive Bench for honoring the Honorable Sara Mathilde Soffel for her groundbreaking legal career and for the pathway she paved for those who have followed.*

**IN WITNESS WHEREOF**, *I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Seal of the County of Allegheny to be affixed this 30<sup>th</sup> day of April, 2014.*

*Rich Fitzgerald*

Rich Fitzgerald