

COUNTY OF



ALLEGHENY

RICH FITZGERALD  
COUNTY EXECUTIVE

## *Proclamation*

**WHEREAS**, *Black History Month is a time to honor and celebrate the culture, heritage, and history of African-Americans in the United States; the year Black History Month was adopted, President Gerald Ford urged all Americans to, “seize the opportunity to honor the too-often neglected accomplishments of black Americans in every area of endeavor throughout our history;” and*

**WHEREAS**, *Huddie “Lead Belly” Ledbetter was born into poverty in 1889 in the post-war South and despite growing up in an environment of racism and with a poor education, became one of the most influential musicians of the 20<sup>th</sup> century; and*

**WHEREAS**, *Lead Belly first tried his hand at playing music when he was only two years old; after the 8<sup>th</sup> grade, he quit school and, by the time he was 14 years old, he was a popular musician and singer in the weekend “sukey jumps” and “juke joints;” he later became known as the king of the twelve-string guitar and “Stella” as he affectionately called his guitar became his ticket to life and his freedom; and*

**WHEREAS**, *Lead Belly has inspired generations of musicians through his work, from The Weavers to the Grateful Dead, and from Van Morrison to The Beach Boys; today, many of his songs can be found in the Library of Congress, so that generations to come can listen and enjoy them; and*

**WHEREAS**, *in honor of Lead Belly and his life’s work, Comcast has partnered with the Smithsonian Channel to provide our region a premier public screening of the “Legend of Lead Belly” at the Senator John Heinz History Center; the screening will be followed by a panel discussion featuring Terika Dean, director of the Lead Belly Estate, and a relative of Lead Belly.*

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** *that I, Allegheny County Executive Rich Fitzgerald, by virtue of the authority vested in me, do hereby proclaim Wednesday, February 18, 2015 as “Lead Belly Day” in Allegheny County.*

**IN WITNESS WHEREOF**, *I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Seal of the County of Allegheny to be affixed this 18<sup>th</sup> day of February, 2015.*

*Rich Fitzgerald*

Rich Fitzgerald