

**B-PEP PLANNING
COUNCIL**

Tim Stevens
Chairman & CEO

Valerie Dixon
Vice-Chairperson

Lorraine B. Cook Cross
*Secretary/Civic
Engagement
Coordinator*

A. Odell Richardson
Treasurer

Roy Blankenship, Jr.
*Community
Coordinator*

Rev. Michele P. Ellison
*B-PEP Radio
Host/Producer*

Stephanie M. Carey
*CAV/B-PEP Admin.
Asst.*

Shayla Holmes
*CEIR Executive
Assistant/
Youth Summit Peace
Coordinator*

Tyler Dague
Media/Web Consultant

In Memoriam:
Rev LeRoy Patrick
**Rev. Dr. James
Garmon**
Rev. Samson Cooper
Reggie Roberts
Karen Wright
Mary Young

Rick Adams
William Anderson
Art Baldwin
Ron Bandes
**Rev. Maureen Cross-
Bolden**
K.L. Brewer
Lois M. Cain
Richard Carrington
Martha Conley, Esq.
Mary Evans
Sister Barbara Finch
**Sarah Bartholomew
Fisher**
Josh Fleitman
Navada Green
Donna Griffin
Alan Guenther
Walter Hales
Elder Eugene Hanner
H.P. Jackson
Douglas Kearney
Ron King
Leona Knight
Jenny Ladd
Lois Toni McClendon
Terrance McDaniel
Errol Miller, Esq.
Kenneth Alan Miller
Faith Mudd
Kim Mudd
Betty Pickett
Nicol Smith Porter
Marlene V. Ramseur
Beth Schongar
**William "Jack"
Simmons Esq.**
John Small
Rev. Eileen O. Smith
Richard A. Stewart, Jr.
Celeste Taylor
David Tessitor
Cynthia Vanda
Rhonda Wood
Ashlev Woodson



c/o Freedom Unlimited, 2201 Wylie Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15219
412-758-7898

January 5, 2024

The Honorable Josh Shapiro, PA Governor
508 Main Capitol Building
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Dear Governor Shapiro:

First, let us wish you and your family a happy and productive New Year on behalf of the Black Political Empowerment Project.

Soon, you will be appointing Judges to the Superior Court and the Court of Common Pleas Fifth District in Allegheny County. The Black Political Empowerment Project (B-PEP) asks that you appoint African-American judges to fill both vacancies in these courts.

Since 1986, B-PEP has been advocating for, and increasing voter participation in, Allegheny County and throughout our Commonwealth. It is the mission of B-PEP that "African Americans VOTE in EACH and EVERY election!", but also that those in elected and appointed positions expeditiously and effectively meet the needs, aspirations, and concerns of the African-American residents that they serve. This includes the judiciary, which is considered the last resort in resolving disputes.

The 2020 U.S. Census says that 13.5% of Allegheny County residents are African Americans, while the population of African Americans in the Allegheny County jail stands above 66% as of the date of this letter.

With only one African-American judge on the Superior Court, its composition is 5.6-6.7% African American (depending on whether one includes senior judges). We believe the appointment of a qualified African-American judge to fill the vacancy created by the election of Judge McCaffrey to the PA Supreme Court will not cure the disparities and discrimination that African Americans have endured but will at least be a step in the right direction.

With only six African Americans out of 43 judges on the Court of Common Pleas of Allegheny County, and only one serving in the Criminal Division where over 60% of its defendants are persons of color, it is hard to fathom a sense of justice in the minds of the majority of defendants who come before this court. There are far too many African Americans and people of color coming before the bench and too few African Americans sitting *on* the bench.

**"It's a LIFETIME COMMITMENT...
African Americans VOTE in EACH and EVERY election!!!"**
Celebrating the 59th Anniversary of the 1965 Voting Rights Act.

Email: b-pepinfo@b-pep.net
Website: www.b-pep.net

We believe the appointment of a qualified African American to fill the vacancy of now retired African-American President Judge Kim Berkeley Clark to the Allegheny County Court of Common Pleas, again will not solve all our community's concerns but is an actionable step in the right direction.

Thank you for all that you do for our Commonwealth. We look forward to your immediate attention and action on this historic request.

Thank you.

Tim Stevens

Tim Stevens
Chairman & CEO
The Black Political Empowerment Project (B-PEP)
412-758-7898, 412-212-8775

cc: Lt. Gov. Austin Davis
Sen. Jay Costa
Sen. Sharif Street, Chair of the PA Democratic Party
Sen Anthony Williams
Sen. Vincent Hughes
Rep. Joanna McClinton, Speaker of the PA House

**“It’s a LIFETIME COMMITMENT...
African Americans VOTE in EACH and EVERY election!!”**
Celebrating the 59th Anniversary of the 1965 Voting Rights Act.

Email: b-pepinfo@b-pep.net
Website: www.b-pep.net