**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** **July 7, 2025**

**Statement from the Erie County Human Relations Commission on the Death of Marchello Woodard**

Erie, PA — As Director of the Erie County Human Relations Commission, I want to extend my deepest condolences to the family, friends, and loved ones of Marchello Woodard. His tragic death has shaken our community, and we stand with all those who are grieving and seeking clarity, justice, and healing.

While the investigation into this incident continues, this moment compels us to reflect not only on what happened, but on the systemic issues that make tragedies like this far too common, especially for Black and Brown members of our community.

The Erie County Human Relations Commission (ECHRC) exists to fight discrimination and promote equal opportunity for all residents. We investigate complaints in the areas of housing, employment, and public accommodations when individuals are treated unfairly based on protected characteristics such as race, color, religion, age, national origin, disability, gender identity, and more. We also serve as a vital resource for education and outreach, helping to address systemic inequities, inform the public of their rights, and build a culture of equity and respect throughout Erie County.

In this moment, our role is especially important. We know that Black and Brown communities often face disproportionate barriers to justice. That is why we are committed not only to enforcing civil rights protections but to creating spaces where people can speak, be heard, and be affirmed in their experiences.

We are currently working with community partners to build an event centered on the voices and experiences of Black and Brown residents of Erie County. This event will include local leaders, advocates, and community members, and will be an opportunity to share truth, honor lived experiences and call for meaningful change. Updates on the time, date, and location of this event will be shared in the coming days.

The Commission believes that every person in our community deserves to feel safe, seen, and supported. We will continue our work until this vision is realized.

For more information or to report a concern, please visit<https://www.eriecountycouncilpa.gov/human-relations-commission/> or contact our office at 814.451.7021 or HRC@eriecountypa.gov.

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