**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**
**July 10, 2025**

**Erie County Human Relations Commission Launches “Being Black in Erie” Panel Series**

**Race, Place & Belonging Series Kicks Off July 17 at Blasco Library**

**ERIE, PA** — The Erie County Human Relations Commission (ECHRC) invites the public to the launch of a new panel series titled *Race, Place & Belonging: Being Black in Erie.* The first session will take place on Thursday, July 17 at 5:30 p.m. in the H.O. Hirt Auditorium at the Blasco Library, 160 E. Front Street, Erie, PA.

Moderated by Pastor Ryan Gaines, the panel will feature local Black residents and business owners—including Nicci Page, Marc Blount, Marty Nwachukwu, Edison Nicholson, Autumn Parker, Tiffany L. LaVette, and Ashton Jones—who will share personal stories about life, work, identity, and navigating systemic challenges in the Erie region.

“This series represents the heart of our mission,” said Dr. Kristy Gnibus, Director of the Erie County Human Relations Commission. “By creating space for honest dialogue and amplifying the voices of Black residents, we hope to promote deeper understanding and support efforts that make Erie a more inclusive and equitable place for all.”

*Race, Place & Belonging: Being Black in Erie* is the first in a series that will continue through to 2026. The initiative is designed to center lived experiences while fostering awareness, empathy, and meaningful change.

The event is free and open to the public. Community members of all backgrounds are encouraged to attend.

*Erie County Human Relations Commission works to eliminate discrimination in employment, housing and public accommodations. The Commission investigates claims of unlawful discrimination to ensure equal opportunities for all people.*

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