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Contact: Don Ursetti 330-379-3616
dursetti@cpcourt.summitoh.net

JUVENILE COURT HONORS SYKES FAMILY WITH BANNER UNVEILING

On February 22, 2024, the Summit County Juvenile Court unveiled a banner recognizing the contributions to the Summit County community of Akron School Board Member Barbara, State Senator Dr. Vernon, and Congresswoman Emilia Sykes. The ceremony took place at 4:30pm in the main lobby of the William P. Kannel Juvenile Court Center.

With family members, friends, elected officials, and Court staff looking on, Judge Linda Tucci Teodosio presided over the ceremony.

“Today, we are thrilled to recognize three people who have had a tremendous impact locally, statewide, and nationally,” said Judge Teodosio. “They are extraordinary individuals who just happen to be from the same family.”

Judge Teodosio then introduced Malcolm Costa, Executive Director of the Akron-Summit Community Action Foundation and a close friend of the Sykes family. Mr. Costa outlined the many achievements of the honorees. Chief among them were Barbara Sykes becoming the first woman of color to be elected to Akron City Council and who would later serve in the Ohio House of Representatives; Dr. Vernon Sykes was noted for his 40-plus years in public service as an Akron City Councilman, State Representative, and State Senator; and their daughter, Emilia Sykes, who served in the Ohio House of Representatives and became the first person of color elected to represent Ohio District 13 of the United States Congress.

After Mr. Costa’s remarks, Judge Teodosio asked the honorees to join her as they unveiled the banner, entitled, “The First Family of Akron Politics: Barbara, Dr. Vernon & Emilia Sykes”. After the unveiling, each of them were invited to make some comments.

Barbara Sykes: “I can’t think of a better honor than this. Because there is nothing better than saying, to me, that I represented my community, I represented my culture and my race in a way that all of you are proud of.”

Dr. Vernon Sykes: “We stand here because of so many of you who are here today. Your support, your advice, and your friendship has meant so much to us through the years, and I am honored to represent you.

Emilia Sykes: “This is truly a family of service. I am so thankful to have been given the opportunity to serve as a member of Congress, but I’m mostly thankful to be a member of this beautiful diverse, fantastic community.”

The banner will be displayed for a year in the main lobby of the Juvenile Court Center for a year and then be moved to another position in the building. The banner is part of the Juvenile Court’s on-going observance of Black History and Women’s History Months in February and March, respectively. The banner project first began in 2006 when the Court produced a banner with the image of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and below it, a Pledge of Peace. Visitors to the Court were asked to sign the banner and students across Summit County were sent the Pledge of Peace, which they signed and returned to the Court. Both the banner and the collection of the pledges were sent to the Martin Luther King, Jr. Library in Washington, D.C., where the banner was displayed. Three years later, Women’s History Month was coupled with Black History Month.