

# Fitzgerald kicks off 2017 PowerBreakfast series

Christian Morrow



**ANNUAL TRADITION**—Rich Fitzgerald poses with Samuel Stephenson and Doris Carson Williams after his annual January PowerBreakfast address to the African American Chamber of Commerce.

For the seventh time in a row, County Executive Rich Fitzgerald gave the first PowerBreakfast presentation of the year to the African American Chamber of Commerce, touting his administration's achievements in creating a better environment for starting, building and attracting business to the region.

As always, he enjoyed a packed house as more than 80 people attended the Jan. 20 breakfast at the Rivers Club in Oxford Center.

Many of them represented organizations Fitzgerald said the county is successfully partnering with to make the region more successful, including the Pittsburgh Cultural Trust and Vibrant Pittsburgh. He also highlighted existing and future contracting opportunities being created by various county departments including ALCOSAN, which will be awarding more than \$2 billion in contracts to comply with federal rain water and sewage management regulations.

As for existing county contracts, Fitzgerald said 24 percent of county contracts have been awarded to minority-owned firms, and that minorities had received 16 percent of all public works contracts.

Fitzgerald also said his commitment to increasing diversity is reflected in the county's employment, appointments, and promotions. Since taking office, 41 percent of his appointments to authorities have been women and 26 percent are African-American; 57 percent of hires are female and 18 percent are African American.

Additionally, hires of women and African Americans to Director and Deputy Director positions has risen under his leadership— 34 percent of his selections were women and 29 percent were African American. Overall, he said, 21 percent of his appointments were minorities, with minorities accounting for 37 percent of his appointments to major county boards and authorities.

Fitzgerald also reiterated that much of the investments being made in the county result from fiscal policies he enacted which raised a historically-low fund balance of \$5.7 million when he took office, more than \$40 million. As a result, the county saw three bond rating upgrades and eliminated the use of one-time revenue sources to balance the budget.

Chamber President and CEO Doris Carson Williams thanked Fitzgerald for making his PowerBreakfast presentation the first of the year.

“He’s doing a tremendous job on diversity,” she said. “But more importantly, you can call him. And when you do, he gets the message and he follows through.”

Williams also acknowledged new chamber members, reminding them of the orientation meeting Jan. 26 in the 9th floor boardroom in their offices at the Koppers Building. She also highlighted upcoming events including the Feb. 17 PowerBreakfast which will feature Pittsburgh Superintendent of Schools Dr. Anthony Hamlet.

In addition to his presentation, the Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland, and the Pittsburgh Branch, will also have on display its Freedman’s Bank Exhibit-established by President Abraham Lincoln for Black freed slaves in 1865.

The chamber’s Business Institute will also feature a presentation by Campos Research Strategy Vice President Alice Greene on the Top Consumer Trends for 2017 on Feb. 15, and a members-only workshop on how to do business with the Port Authority of Allegheny County. Call 412-392-0610 for more information.