Statement from ACBA Homer S. Brown Division

The Homer S. Brown Division (HSBD) of the Allegheny County Bar Association (ACBA) recently celebrated the appointment of Allegheny County’s first African American President Judge as a belated, but important, step forward for our region. Unfortunately, just one year later, we are confronted with an example of the systemic racism that both attorneys and litigants of color face all too often in our local courts.

We are disheartened to learn of allegations that Judge Mark Tranquilli made racially derogatory remarks at the conclusion of a case over which he was presiding. In remaining steadfast to the mission of HSBD, we have a duty to our members, our clients and the African American community at large to continue to take action to eliminate implicit and explicit racial bias in our legal system. As such, HSBD demands that the Judicial Conduct Board of Pennsylvania initiate a thorough and timely investigation of Judge Tranquilli’s alleged communications, with appropriate referral to the Court of Judicial Discipline for the imposition of all appropriate sanctions.

HSBD condemns any judicial conduct that is demeaning, racist, or discriminatory to any person and considers such behavior to undermine the fair administration of justice. Those elected or appointed to serve in our judiciary must be held to the highest standard. African Americans and all people of color must have every confidence that they will be treated impartially and with the utmost respect during encounters with our judicial system, without exception.

Our system of justice deserves nothing less.

###