

June 3, 2014

Dear Woman of Influence Selection Committee:

Since moving to Des Moines ten years ago, I’ve met many leaders who make a lasting impression, and who work to cultivate our next generation of leadership. I’m writing today to recommend Rita Perea to be considered as a Woman of Influence this year, as one of those notable community-oriented leaders.

The first interactions I had with Rita occurred when we were both members of the American Society for Training & Development (ASTD) - Central Iowa Chapter. Rita is a past President of this organization. She continued her support as a member after her term concluded, and during my time as the Programs Chair as an attendee. Today, we serve on a board together, the Friends of the Greater Des Moines Botanical Garden. It is a pleasure to interact with Rita as a peer on the board, and to observe her ability to listen, question, and contribute to deep and integral discussions.

Perhaps most recent and revealing, however, has been my interaction with Rita regarding a Rotary program on June 20th this year. I volunteered to co-chair a program that brings Des Moines area clubs together for a keynote and reception with Naomi Tutu. When I connected with Rita over coffee one morning on other topics, she offered to be a sponsor without hesitation as I shared what I was working on for this Rotary program. It was clear that Rotary was something she cherished. For those who know Rita, it would not surprise them to learn this, because Rita practices “service above self,” a Rotary guiding principle, in everything she does.

There are many deserving recipients of this award. Rita Perea has made a positive impact on our community, and I look forward to seeing her recognized for her time, her energy, and most of all, for her influence.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Chittenden, Executive Director

Des Moines Downtown Chamber of Commerce