



A mission initiative of Mercy Medical Center - Des Moines  
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Business Record  
Attn: Women of Influence Nominations  
100 4<sup>th</sup> Street  
Des Moines, IA 50309

Re: Women of Influence Award

Dear Business Record Nomination Review Committee:

It is with great enthusiasm and pleasure that I write this letter of support on behalf of Ms. Karla J. Fultz for the Business Record's Women of Influence Award. I have had the privilege of working with Ms. Fultz for the past 19 years. I have found her to be a passionate and effective advocate for those in our community who are at high risk, under-served, and without a voice. She is civic minded and has been quick to address significant community issues with thoughtful, well-reasoned, and innovative solutions.

Ms. Fultz has demonstrated leadership time and time again. She has been a committed champion for women, children, and families in our state. As a Polk County Juvenile Court Judge, Ms. Fultz was instrumental in the development of the state's first Family Drug Court in 2002. This effort was launched as a pilot program to foster and facilitate communication and collaboration between families, providers, and attorneys to aid parents in reunification with their children. The primary emphasis of Judge Fultz's Family Drug Court initiative was to promote permanency by assisting parents and children with the difficult issues of substance abuse, child abuse, and neglect. The goal was to assist them in becoming safe, sober and permanent "forever" families. Ms. Fultz not only provided program participants judicial oversight and service coordination, but she also promoted accountability, communication, collaboration, and reduced duplication of effort.

Under Ms. Fultz's leadership, the results proved impressive. The rate of parental rights terminations decreased by 50%, and the reunification rate for families increased to 82%. Families were reunited after treatment, resulting in vast savings of foster care dollars and in fundamentally changing families' lives by breaking the cycle of poverty. Participants successfully moved from consumers of "system" services to societal contributors.

Ms. Fultz's accomplishments are particularly noteworthy because programs of this type were essentially non-existent in 2002. Her ability to articulate her vision and to enlist voluntary participation without formal funding to offset program expenses clearly highlights her skill at bringing divergent groups together to address common community needs and demonstrates the influence of her charismatic and persuasive leadership style.

Ms. Fultz's efforts were later used as a template for federal funding that replicated Polk County's Family Recovery Court program across the state. Upon leaving the bench in 2009, Fultz continued her work on behalf of families and children in Warren County. In collaboration with Judge Kevin Parker, she established Warren County's first Family Recovery Court. She also provided the leadership in 2010 necessary to create Warren County's first OWI Court.

Over the years, Ms. Fultz has been formally recognized for her vast knowledge and significant contributions to the community. These contributions included participating in the creation of the Polk County Rape Crisis Center in 1974 (which was the genesis for the present victim-advocate system). She received the U.S. Department of Justice Exemplary Project Award in 1976 for her efforts. She also established the first Teen Drug Court in Iowa in 1999 and received the Iowa Supreme Court Innovation Award for this work in 2004. She received the Iowa Supreme Court Innovation Award in 2005 for her efforts on behalf of the Polk County Family Drug Court. Ms. Fultz presented at the National Conference on Replication of Family Drug Courts in 2008. And she was the recipient of the Judge Don Tidrick Honors Award in 2010.

In summary, Ms. Fultz is a strong advocate for those in need. She is a consensus builder who possesses the ability to work effectively with diverse groups of people. She projects self-confidence and has an abundance of positive energy that is an asset in any endeavor. She demonstrates natural leadership ability and maintains a high standard of professionalism, courtesy, and cooperation in dealing with others. She is comfortable in bringing people together towards a common purpose and conveys sincere interest and concern. I have found her to be an inspiring, intelligent, competent, open and honest individual. She doesn't shy away from a challenge and is a tireless worker with a strong sense of responsibility. I'm honored to support her nomination for the Business Record's 2014 Women of Influence.

Sincerely,



Todd C. Beveridge  
Director, House of Mercy