



June 4, 2015

Women of Influence Nominating Committee  
Via On-Line Submission

Re: Meredith Emerging Business Woman of the Year Award

Nominee:

Donna R. Miller  
Grege & Sidney, P.L.C.  
500 East Court Ave, Ste. 200  
Des Moines, Iowa 50309  
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515-245-4300

Nominator:

Jessica L. Cleereman  
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Dear Committee Members:

It is my great pleasure and honor to nominate my colleague and friend, Donna R. Miller, for the Meredith Emerging Business Woman of the Year Award. I believe Donna is an outstanding example of the spirit and devotion to community outreach and activism for which the Meredith award was created. Donna's business success and proven commitment to serving her community through her extensive volunteer and professional work make her an outstanding candidate for this distinguished award.

Donna graduated from Northeast Missouri State University with a Bachelor of Science in Justice Systems. She went on to law school at the University of Iowa College of law, graduating with high distinction in 1995. More recently, in 2011 she earned a Masters in Public Administration from Drake University.

Professionally, Donna has achieved success by serving as a law clerk for both state and federal judges in Iowa and then joining the law firm of Grege & Sidney. She is the firm's longest-serving female partner. She was chosen to become a partner in 2002 and has been with the firm since 1997. Donna has recently begun assisting clients with family law issues in addition to her extensive workers' compensation practice. Last year she was appointed by the Iowa Supreme Court to serve as a member of the Court's Grievance Commission which is tasked with addressing ethical complaints against Iowa attorneys.

Donna was also chosen last month to serve as a Director for the Polk County Bar Association, and intends to focus on improvements to the Volunteer Lawyer Project to assist more low-income residents in Polk County with legal issues. She is also a

member of the Iowa Association of Workers' Compensation Attorneys, the Iowa Defense Counsel Association, the National Association of Women Business Owners, and the Polk County Women Attorneys, as well as many other bar associations and related organizations.

The level of volunteer work to which Donna commits herself is truly inspiring. She has been involved with Goodwill Industries in some capacity on a local, national, and international level for approximately 15 years. She began as a volunteer in 1999, and was soon the President of Volunteer Services, a position she held almost continuously until 2010. She has also served on the Board of Directors for Goodwill Industries of Central Iowa, serving as board president from 2010 to 2012, and currently sits in an advisory position. She has also been a member of the National Board of Directors for Goodwill Industries International for the past nine years, and is the chair of the Goodwill Volunteer Services Advisory Committee.

In addition to her ongoing dedication to Goodwill, Donna has previously devoted her time and energy to numerous other local organizations. She is a former board member of the AIDS Project of Central Iowa, serving as board president from 2004 to 2010, and the Southwestern Hills Neighborhood Association, serving as board president from 2008 to 2009. She has also previously served on the board of directors for Habitat for Humanity, and was a committee chair from 1998 to 2002. In addition to serving on numerous boards, Donna has worked as a volunteer for the Young Women's Resource Center, serving on the curriculum committee and event committee, and the Youth Leadership Initiative, serving on the curriculum, alumni, and selection committees. She was a member of the 2001 Greater Des Moines Leadership Institute, and returned the following year to serve on the curriculum committee. She has previously volunteered locally as a Junior High Mock Trial Coach; for the Emerging Leadership Institute; at the Drake Adult Education Center as a tutor; with Big Brothers and Big Sisters; and with Churches United Shelter.

Currently, in addition to her ongoing work with Goodwill, Donna volunteers time with Everybody Wins Iowa, which is a literacy and mentoring program that pairs adults and children for one-on-one reading experiences. The organization's goal is to increase children's opportunities for success in school and life through these weekly reading sessions. Donna not only devotes her own time to this program, but has successfully encouraged several colleagues and friends to join her, further enriching the program's goals. Additionally, Donna has recently become involved with the Beacon of Life, a nonprofit transitional center for women. Her work there will initially focus on helping the residents learn to maintain a budget, and knowing Donna, it will blossom in to much more. Again, she has inspired others to join her in this work, myself included.

Most recently, Donna has joined the volunteer book club program at the Iowa Correctional Institution for Women, which was recently implemented through the joint efforts of the warden and Judge Donna Paulsen. The program will involve

reading and discussing literature with the inmates, in an effort to promote literacy and education.

Professionally, Donna has previously volunteered for the Legal Hotline for Older Iowans, and as an arbitrator for the Better Business Bureau Autoline. For the past several years, Donna has worked many hours taking cases on a pro bono basis for the Volunteer Lawyers Project. She has been repeatedly commended for her dedication and hours of pro bono service, as she well exceeds the 50 hours recommended by the Iowa Supreme Court each year. In addition, she was recently appointed to the Supreme Court's Grievance Committee and served as the Polk County Bar CLE Committee Chair for four years.

Donna's commitment to advocacy and activism through her extensive volunteer work, professional activities, and community service will serve as a strong foundation for her to continue to advance in the local and state legal community as well as taking more leadership roles in the non-profit community.

We are lucky to have someone with her level of dedication in our community, and as a member of our profession. Personally, I am lucky to call her a colleague and friend, and she inspires me every day to do more, be more, and give more. Donna will continue to make Des Moines and Iowa better through her work, and while she is very humble, I believe that deserves recognition. Not only as a way to say thank you to Donna, but as a means to reach further and inspire even more people to do more, be more, and give more.

Thank you for your time and attention to this letter. If you have any questions, or need any additional information about Donna Miller, I am happy to assist. Again, thank you for your time and the opportunity to nominate my friend for this honor.

Very truly yours,

*Jessica L. Cleereman*

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