



May 16, 2016

I would like to nominate Michelle DeClerke for the Business Record Women of Influence Award.

Michelle has started and grown Conference Event Management to be the successful business it is today. In addition to growing her own business she has managed to still participate in a number of volunteer opportunities.

I know personally she has volunteered time to the Iowa Women's Leading Change Conference in Des Moines the last few years. She has been especially involved in building out the student track as part of that program and has spent many hours helping women students make the connection to Women in Leadership roles and making a difference in their communities.

I met Michelle in a networking group for women called the Summit. She is a natural leader and adds a great deal of value to the groups she joins. She gets involved and not only does she openly and willingly share her time, but she sincerely has an interest in seeing other women in business succeed. As a part of our experience in that group she has given time and volunteered for the Dress for Success Organization as well.

Michelle is active in her son's philanthropic activities. Dylan founded Opportunity on Deck to help kids who don't have the financial means to participate in organized sports and be a part of them. Dylan has learned, no doubt, through his Mother's example, the importance of giving back and many night's you will find the whole DeClerke family volunteering and working with the kids.

I had the opportunity to meet the team at CEM a few years ago and witness Michelle's leadership and guidance. It is easy to see the determination and tenacity she puts into her business and the professional development of her team. She is a leader and coach but also a continual learner herself. She is always open to new ideas and ways of looking at things.

I have had my own business and know first-hand how challenging it is. She inspired me with her due diligence, discipline, and can-do spirit. She has a strong work ethic and surrounds herself with hardworking, talented, and creative professionals. I have watched that business grow from a strong referral-based organization to a very strategic sales organization with the customer experience and personal touch always at the forefront of what they deliver.

Her success in founding and growing CEM while staying connected and giving back to her community, mentoring other women, children, and business professionals, make her an outstanding nominee for the Women of Influence Award.

Sincerely,

Ketsie Wilkins
Business Development Director
Employee & Family Resources