May 25, 2016

Ms. Janette Larkin, Publisher

Des Moines Business Record

100 – 4th Street

Des Moines, IA 50309

Dear Janette and the Women of Influence Judges:

Please accept this resubmission of **Emily Abbas** as a 2016 Woman of Influence, as my strongest possible support of her candidacy. Selecting Emily as **either one of the youngest “Women of Influence” OR as the most established “Emerging Women of Influence”** will send the right message to women across the community who are in the “on deck” group that has aged out of the YP era but not yet hit the CEO level. Emily is the prime example of someone in this category that deserves recognition for her professional work, deep community involvement and life-long commitment to mentoring others.

Rather than resubmit letters of recommendation (more than 70 are available from my 2015 nomination), I would like to focus on Emily’s accomplishments and further involvement over the past year.

**New in the Last 12 Months:**

* Completed term as President of the Drake National Alumni Board (NAB) and transitioned to Chair of the NAB and a member of the Drake University Board of Trustees; on Selection Committee for open Director of Alumni Relations position; Drake University President Inauguration Committee Member; helped plan a series of dinners to introduce President Martin to Central Iowa CEOs (Fall 2015)
* Appointed Chair of the Greater Des Moines Partnership’s new Communications Board; also represents the Communications Board on the Greater Des Moines Partnership Board and was recently asked to join the Greater Des Moines Partnership Executive Committee due to the respect she has earned from the Partnership leaders and board members
* All-Star Evening to Benefit Character Counts – 2016 Auction Committee Chair; 2016 Fundraising Committee Member (The event raised a record $391,000)
* 2016 Heart Ball – Member of the Executive Leadership Team (Event raised a record $400,000+)
* NAACP’s 100-Year Celebration Freedom Fund Banquet – Planning Committee Member
* United Way of Central Iowa:
  + 2015 Workplace Cabinet Member and Co-Chair of the Media/Communications segment where donations were up 19% over goal; agreed to serve in this same capacity in 2016
  + 2016 Chair’s Group Cabinet member (one of only two females)
  + Joined Tocqueville Society
* 2016 Community Connect Program Mentor (part of Greater Des Moines Leadership Institute)
* ART RTE Committee Member – co-leading the PR and marketing efforts to launch this project the summer of 2016
* Created a Marketing Plan for selling tickets to the 2017 Solheim Cup (volunteer role; plan was handed over to the LPGA for execution)
* Des Moines Community Playhouse – Board Member since 2011; Co-Chair for new Board Member Recruitment Committee; in April Emily hosted one in a series of luncheons for select local leaders regarding ACT TWO of the organization’s capital campaign; secured in-kind donation of much of organization’s new responsive website; only Board President in the past six years to stay on after serving in this leadership capacity in order to provide background and continuity while the Playhouse works on leadership succession planning
* Joined me as an Honorary Drake Women’s Basketball Coach – Efforts to “Pack the Knapp Center” led to a 49% increase in attendance at the home opening game over the previous year; also had more than 50 tickets donated to charities so local kids could attend
* Greater Des Moines Community Foundation’s Ignite Challenge – Planning Committee
* Guest column contributor to *LIFT Iowa*
* Panelist (with me) at Iowa Association of Business Communicators “Groundbreaking Ideas in 30 Minutes” luncheon (April 2016)
* Panelist at the GDMLI’s Community Leadership Class on arts as an economic driver (May 2016)
* Emily is spearheading a community-wide Volunteer Fair for September 2016 with David Chivers. This came about after hearing from many non-profits about how attending multiple fairs for companies in Central Iowa is taxing for their resources
* 2016 Better Business Bureau Torch Awards – Judge
* 2016 Des Moines Register/Juice YP of the Year Awards – Judge
* Was just asked to be one of the 25-30 executives at the Principal Charity Classic’s Networking on the Green event on June 3, 2016

**Recent Honors**

* Named a national “Top Woman in PR” by PR News (first ever from Iowa, in same year as Eileen Gannon of Workiva, also from Iowa)
* Best Up and Coming Business Leader (Runner-Up) in the *Business Record’s* 2015 Best of Des Moines issue
* Invited to join the NEXUS Executive Women’s Alliance
* Earned Net Promoter Score (NPS) certification

**Continued Community Service**

* Robert D. and Billie Ray Center at Drake University – Advisory Council Member
* Governor’s STEM Advisory Council – Member (helped create the STEM awareness campaign in 2014 that led to an increase from 26% to 41% in public awareness in one year)
* United Way Volunteer Cabinet – Member
* Business Volunteer Council – Member
* Bravo Gala Sales Committee (2nd year), event sold out the earliest ever
* Yankee Doodle Pops Viewing Party – Planning Committee Member
* Downtown Events Group – Board Member, and Planning Committee Member for the 2016 Wonder of Words and World Food and Music Festivals
* Drake Divas – Member
* Confirmation Guide for 8th graders at Plymouth Church (two year commitment completed, will start another two-year commitment in September)
* Mentor to dozens of young professionals, former co-workers and students

**Leadership at Bankers Trust**

* Continues working both as Chief Marketing Officer and Chief of Staff
* Oversees Bankers Trust’s $1 million+ in charitable donations
* Leading preparations for celebrations for Bankers Trust’s Centennial Year in 2017
* Led communications effort for naming and transition of Don Coffin to President
* Oversaw Phoenix office move communications and grand opening celebration
* Led communications efforts surrounding the Cedar Rapids systems merger
* Formalized the Bank’s employee volunteer program; held first Employee Volunteer Recognition luncheon in April
* Facilitated the Bank’s Mobile Money Match campaign to promote mobile banking and check capture with consumers – all goals exceeded and resulted in the highest months ever for express deposit usage
* Launched marketing campaign to celebrate recognition as Best Bank and Best Commercial Lender – this work was recently recognized with a Iowa Bankers Association Award
* Led efforts to hold a Leadership Giving event during the Bankers Trust United Way campaign (for the first time in many years), which significantly increased the number of Bank leadership givers
* Spearheading a project where Bankers Trust purchased 12 pieces of art by Iowa artists (Launching on June 16 as part of Art Week Des Moines)
* Was the driving force behind Bankers Trust signing up for the EPIC Challenge; is helping promote this participation in an upcoming *Business Record* ad
* Led effort for Bankers Trust’s Management Committee’s first-ever team volunteering activity at Dorothy’s House

This list is long, but not exhaustive. I included all of the above because I believe it provides some color surrounding how Emily continues to give more to her organization and our community. One year ago, I wasn’t sure how she fit it all in, and after looking through this list I am even more impressed. She will not stop and will soon be running our great city.

Please give Emily your strongest consideration. It is important women of all ages receive recognition, not just those who are new in their careers or at the end – although, I would put Emily’s depth and breadth of involvement up against any women of any age in our community. If you are unsure about this, I encourage you to go back and read the letters of support I submitted last year, as they will bring a tear to your eyes when you realize how many people she has touched and impacted.

Her letters of recommendation show that she not only does her best, but she gives her all to help others succeed. I have personally witnessed this and know Emily meets other professionals for coffee nearly every morning to discuss their challenges, connect them to others, provide a listening ear, and give solid advice. She is truly preparing our next generation of leaders for even greater success – which will be her legacy.

Without hesitation and with most sincere admiration, I submit to you Emily Abbas as a 2016 Woman of Influence or the 2016 Emerging Woman of Influence.

Sincerely,

Tiffany Tauscheck, Chief Communications Officer

Greater Des Moines Partnership