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Des Moines Business Record  
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To Whom It May Concern:

It is with great pleasure that I nominate Dianne Bystrom, director of the Carrie Chapman Catt Center for Women and Politics, for the 2017 Women of Influence Award. I had the privilege of getting to know Dr. Bystrom as a political science student, as a member and vice president of the Carrie Chapman Catt Associates, and through conducting research for her amazing work.

Dr. Bystrom's résumé is more than impressive enough to garner this award. She's been a dedicated member of Iowa State for close to 20 years; is known for and sought after, both nationally and internationally, for her political expertise by all media outlets; and is a co-author, co-editor, or contributor for more than 20 books and countless publications, all while directing the Catt Center and teaching future leaders of tomorrow.

During my time at Iowa State as well as post-graduation, Dr. Bystrom has always displayed a high degree of integrity and her leadership is nothing short of inspiring. Through persuasion and personal connections, she has the ability to make others see her vision and feel personally invested in the accomplishments of the center as well as the political arena. As the director, there isn't a specific roadmap on how to fulfill the center's mission to provide leadership development and educational opportunities for those interested in politics and public service, yet she is constantly leading us through these uncharted waters with ease and expert grace.

Dr. Bystrom has the natural ability to generate enthusiasm for involvement. Through her leadership and connections, she constantly brings opportunities for students and the community to participate in political campaigns, educational workshops, organizations, etc. Through her influence, I was privy to unique opportunities to assist with and learn from political events of all parties. She encouraged the overall political process and really challenged me to understand each political level and to educate myself on all sides of an issue before making a conclusion. This skill is something I've been able to apply both personally and professionally, not just politically. She also taught me the key is not which party you affiliate with but that you're involved, that you're engaged.

It was through her guidance that I learned of and joined the League of Women Voters while a student at Iowa State, furthering my education through life experiences and pushing me to gain a better understanding and connection to my local communities, forcing me outside the comforts of our Iowa State campus and providing me with a passion to always participate and do more for each community I'm a part of. This call to action ignited right away, such as volunteering/teaching at the Ames Boys & Girls Club, joining the ISUAA SALC/SAA Homecoming Central as Community Service chair, leading the Habit for Humanity Blitz Build, and even today, serving on the board of directors for my local Blue Earth Convention and Visitors Bureau Board, Blue Earth Kiwanis Club, and as the current chair of our Economic

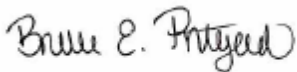
Development Authority (EDA) for Blue Earth, MN. Again, it's not about focusing on just particular politics but being involved, engaged, and making a difference.

Dr. Bystrom works diligently to showcase great woman leaders in politics by providing rare opportunities to students and in turn, highlighting Iowa State. Soledad O'Brien, Elizabeth Dole, Hillary Clinton, and Carly Fiorina are only a few of the high-caliber speakers who have come to campus as political experts to inspire, educate and encourage young women and men. Hillary Clinton recently said, "You have to step up, dare to compete, get into the process, and then the country has to take that leap of faith." Through Dr. Bystrom, leadership at the Catt Center continuously provides possibilities and dares young people to step up and be engaged in the political process, asking each of us to take a leap of faith and be part of something bigger. She's a role model in the true sense of the word—a leader whom others want to emulate and hope to do so with an ounce of the ethical standards she displays.

Finally, Dr. Bystrom allowed me to participate in collecting research for one of her many projects, which included cold calling local residents to discuss specific campaign-related questions. I can say that cold calling is not my forte; however, being taught the skills of oral presentation, interviewing and persistence have been priceless. The experience allowed me to sharpen my abilities of when to listen, when to further engage and how to foster personal network—something I'm blessed to use daily.

Dr. Dianne Bystrom is a passionate advocate whose impact is limitless. I am proud to give my wholehearted endorsement and hope you genuinely consider her as one of your award recipients. If you want additional information and/or have any questions, please contact me at (507) 676-0820 or [Prestegard.brooke@gmail.com](mailto:Prestegard.brooke@gmail.com). Thank you in advance for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Brooke E. Prestegard