May 22, 2017

To the Woman of Influence Selection Committee,

As a former colleague of Jennie Baranczyk’s at Drake University, I am writing to support the nomination of Jennie for a 2017 Woman of Influence award.

I know no other way to begin this letter of support other than to say Jennie Baranczyk is an incredibly special human being, a dedicated mother and wife, sister, daughter, friend, and colleague, and most of all, the most amazing head coach a University could ever want in leading a women’s Division I basketball program. In completing her fifth season at Drake in 2016-17, Jennie guided the Bulldogs to a 28-5 record, which featured a 22-game winning streak that set program and Missouri Valley Conference records. Drake became the first team to finish the MVC regular season with an unblemished record (18-0), while winning the school’s first regular season conference title since 2008 and the first MVC tournament title since 2007. Jennie was also named Missouri Valley’s Coach of the Year and most recently served as a court coach during the 2017 US Basketball Women’s U19 World Cup Team Trials. The trials are used to select the 12-member team that will represent the USA at the 2017 FIBA U19 World Cup for Women.

Those accomplishments in and of themselves are more than impressive, however, what makes Jennie stand out is the way in which she coaches her student-athletes and *influences* their lives. She lives and leads a culture within Drake called “The Bulldog Way,” essentially a model for excellence, ethics, and leadership that is unique in collegiate athletics. Jennie does not compromise nor cut corners. She leads by example and at the center of her message to her team is one that is not often found in any culture outside biological family – and that is one of love… love for one another, love for the game, and love for Drake University. Additionally, Jennie teaches student-athletes how important that community and giving back is on a daily basis. The Drake Women’s basketball team is involved in over 1,000 hours of community service work while also maintaining the highest grade point averages in the Missouri Valley Conference.

As Drake President Marty Martin often remarks, “Every city needs a great university and every university needs a great city.” Without question, Jennie Baranczyk’s remarkable leadership at Drake University has not only enhanced Des Moines’ reputation as a great city, but has also left an indelible mark on young women’s lives for years to come. Thank you for considering Jennie Baranczyk as a 2017 Woman of Influence.

Sincerely,



Shannon Cofield

President, Mercy Foundation