May 23, 2018

To the Women of Influence nomination committee:

It is my privilege and honor to submit this letter of support for Leisha Barcus for the 2018 Women of Influence award.

After attending my first Women of Influence ceremony, I reflected on the women I have been privileged to know and work with over my 35 years in the Des Moines area and who I believe would deserve to be recognized among this elite group of women. Which woman would I tell my daughters was one of the most influential in positively impacting women’s lives? Leisha Barcus was at the top of my list then and remains there to this day.

My professional relationship with Leisha began 2 years ago with the development and opening of the Mercy Comfort Health Center for Women. This multi-specialty clinic is unique to Iowa and provides comprehensive medical care to women, especially during their midlife years, with traditional medicine and complementary services. After Mercy received an $8.5M donation from the late Frank Comfort, Leisha was hired to serve as director. She was entrusted to take this project that had been only been a vision for many years at Mercy and see it through to the success it is today. Leisha was responsible for the design, construction oversight, programming, marketing and staffing. In addition, she assisted in raising additional monies of $1.2M through events focused on educating the wider community on important women’s health issues.

With the center now open, Leisha continues to demonstrate her leadership capabilities daily with both staff and providers. This goes beyond her ability to manage business aspects, but also showcases her strong desire to help women receive quality medical care. Every interaction with Leisha leaves me impressed not only with her professionalism, but with her passion to improve the lives of other women. Her enthusiasm inspires each one of us to be the best we can be every day!

My respect for Leisha only begins at the Women’s Center as her past accomplishments, not only in her professional roles, but as a community leader are truly admirable. From her service as President of the Nexus Women’s Executive Alliance to receiving the Des Moines Neighbors’ Alice Rodine-Robert W. Mickle Recognition Award, one can gain insight to her many talents and gifts she has shared with the women of Central Iowa.

As a physician, my strengths lie within the medical field and not in writing eloquent letters. However, I hope I am able to convey my sincere respect for Leisha and my wholehearted support for her nomination for the Woman of Influence 2018 award.

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