May 19, 2018

Dear Business Record Women of Influence Award Committee:

It is with great honor that I recommend my colleague, mentor and friend, Dr. Laura Higgins for the prestigious Women of Influence Award. Reviewing the criteria for the award, I can testify that Laura excels in every area listed—at work, in the community, with non-profits, and role modeling and mentoring younger women.

My relationship with Laura at DuPont Pioneer (now Corteva Agriscience) began about 4 years ago when I took a role as a functional leader in the Research Department. Laura was one of my direct reports. I was a young new manager with many experienced men and Laura on my Leadership Team. Laura supported me from day 1, supporting my ideas and leadership to the rest of the leadership team, helping to bring the group together towards our objectives, helping to gain alignment on tough issues, and often sending me notes of encouragement. In my opinion, Laura, 7 years my senior, should have been my boss, but instead, I was hers and she supported me every moment. Laura firmly believes in raising up women to achieve their full potential. Not only did she help me, but she does the same for countless other women in our company. To this day, I consider her my primary ‘life mentor.’ Her ethics are impeccable, and she will always raise up and encourage women to challenge themselves and support each other. She is selfless and humble, and is one of our best role models. Her motivations are true, and her respect is evident everywhere.

Laura has had a very impactful and successful R&D career at Corteva, her rise from her entry position level of Research Assistant to now Research Director (this is nearly unheard of), is a testimony to the sound science and impact she makes. While she was employed, she went back to school to finish her Ph.D. in Entomology. She has been involved in several critical product stewardship teams, both internal and external, leading the science to ensure that our products are managed safely and appropriately by our customers. One of these was her leadership on the ‘blended refuge’ concept. Her team lead DuPont Pioneer to develop a novel, simple way for growers to comply with legal requirements for insect refuge in Insect Resistant Corn hybrids, by simply blending the refuge (non-insect resistant) seed with the insect resistant seed in the bag. This eliminated the need for growers to plant a separate ‘refuge’ field, and made compliance simple. This is only one such example of the many impacts she has had within DuPont Pioneer, and now Corteva.

Outside of work, Laura is an avid philanthropist both with her resources and time. She serves on the boards several Des Moines groups including the Science Center of Iowa and Girl Scouts of Greater Iowa. She leads her own girl scout troop—the first completely STEM based Girl Scout troop in Iowa, and organizes several events for them to ‘get hooked’ on Science. Further, she has lead the Homeless Assistance Team and DuPont Pioneer, organizing employees to serve meals twice a month at the Central Iowa Shelter & Services dinners. She is highly involved in the community, her family and her career.

The one thing that I appreciate the most about Laura is her selflessness. She clearly puts other’s needs ahead of hers, she is happiest when she sees others succeed. She tirelessly nominates women for awards, and puts in good words for people to their managers, because she wants to see every woman raised up. She is all about everyone, humbly, laughing, and smiling when they succeed. She is who I want to be in 7 years. I am proud to know her, and to have such a great role model.

I humbly request you to consider her for this prestigious award, it is her turn to be in the spot light, since she has pointed it at so many others.

Sincerely,

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