



March 10, 2015

To whom it may concern,

I would like to encourage you to select Gerry Neugent for the Great Western Bank Commercial Real Estate Professional of the year.

I first met Gerry at Drake Law School in the 1970's. We then practiced law together at the Wimer law firm. Gerry stayed on and became a partner in the Wimer Firm and later the Belin Firm while I moved on to become corporate counsel at Iowa Realty/Knapp Properties. Gerry was our outside counsel until 1993, when he became President of Knapp Properties.

I have often said, when my Uncle Bill Knapp hired Gerry Neugent, it was the best decision he ever made. Gerry's leadership at the company is a big reason for our success over the years. He took his real estate law knowledge and experience and combined it with practical business sense and negotiating skills and became the best real estate CEO in Iowa.

Gerry enjoys the highest level of admiration and respect by the elected officials and staffs at all the local municipalities, counties and the State of Iowa. When Gerry presents a project on behalf of Knapp Properties or for a community organization he represents, he is always knowledgeable, thorough and never "overpromises". He is known for his honesty and civility and I believe this is why he enjoys so much respect in the Des Moines community.

Gerry is also highly regarded in the Des Moines business community. This is evidenced by his recent selection as the Chair of the Greater Des Moines Partnership. If there is a project being promoted by the Des Moines Business Community or one of our non-profit institutions, there is a good chance Gerry is leading it or in some way involved. Some recent examples include the new downtown convention hotel, the new downtown YMCA, the Des Moines Redevelopment Group, the Des Moines Playhouse, the Des Moines Library, the Heart Walk, the ALS walk and the Juvenile Diabetes Foundation.

Gerry coordinates all of the Knapp Properties development efforts. In this last year he has obtained approval of the Hy-Vee/Knapp Court Ave. project. He also completed a 3 year effort to obtain a permit to build a bridge over the Raccoon River in West Des Moines. He completed development of three large residential projects - Allerton Park in Urbandale, Prairie Crossing in Waukee and Woodhaven in Polk City. Gerry also led the effort to plan and/or build three Unity Point Clinics and the 120 unit Bella Terra apartment project in West Des Moines.

The thing I admire most about Gerry is the leadership role he plays at Knapp Properties. We are known as a family company because we were founded by the Knapp family. But we also have a culture of being a "family company" and that in large part is due to the leadership of Gerry and his open minded personality and encouragement of comradery among all our employees. He knows how to be a boss and also a friend.

I believe Gerry would be the perfect recipient of the first annual Great Western Bank Commercial Real Estate Professional.

Sincerely,

William C. Knapp II
Chairman of the Board