

January 14, 2016

Re: Brett Van Zee

To whom it may concern:

Brett Van Zee has demonstrated the utmost architectural skills and professionalism in the several years that we have worked together. I am constantly impressed with his great attitude and ability to problem solve "on the fly". This is difficult for many of the Consultants who work for our organization, but Brett really excels at it. We very often change courses during typical projects that we do. Brett takes this head on with enthusiasm. He has a great ability to calm easily frustrated Users, Contractors, co-workers, and his Capital Management clients.

I have also witnessed how well he mentors new individuals who are just starting out in their careers. He very much excels in teaching and encouraging new people.

Brett also shows the ability to multitask effectively while taking on high volumes of work from our office. Again, his enthusiasm is admirable.

I highly recommend him and am happy to furnish more details if you need additional information.

Kelly

Kelly Stevenson | E & A Senior Project Manager

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01/08/2016

To Whom It May Concern:

It is with great enthusiasm and pride that I nominate Brett Van Zee as a candidate for the 40 under 40. I know of Brett's leadership ability in two forms; first, as a peer in the profession of architecture and, second, as an energetic leader in Des Moines. In both instances it is evident that Brett is an enormous contributor and a positive influence to our firm, profession, and community.

When we hired Brett in 2004, it did not take long to see that he was going to develop into a well-rounded architect and leader of our firm. There are four characteristics that stand out with Brett that have allowed him to develop into a great leader; personality, soft skills, knowledge and drive.

Brett's personality at a young age allowed him to integrate into our firm, gain the trust of his peers, and very quickly begin taking more leadership on projects. He had the ability to take direction and accomplish tasks as a young professional better than anyone I know. That personality leads to unprecedented soft skills, and his ability to work with everyone has made him a client favorite and leader of staff.

Brett's knowledge of architecture, construction, engineering, and business has made him one of the individuals that the Partners lean on and one of the most successful project managers we have. Managing projects up to \$35M with teams of 15-20 people takes an individual that understands all aspects of a project and the business. If he does not know something he will put forth the effort to educate himself and more importantly take the time to educate those around him.

Brett's leadership has been integral in helping the growth of our studio and firm with his abilities to lead more projects and manage more staff. In the past ten years, our Des Moines studio has grown from eight people to over thirty, while our two office firm has grown from 28 to 60 people. In addition to his project responsibilities, Brett manages staffing and scheduling for those 60 people working on more than \$500M worth of design and construction.

As a Board member, his responsibilities include strategic planning, long range project planning, staff management, and project financials. I have witnessed first-hand Brett's great ability to balance the management of projects, staff, and firm responsibilities with a great attitude. This is all due to those four characteristics that allow him to be a great leader; personality, soft skills, knowledge and drive.

Brett's commitment and contribution to the profession of architecture, our community and his family is unwavering. I take great pleasure in highly recommending Brett Van Zee to the elite 40 under 40 not only because of the leadership he already provides our firm but the leadership role he will take in the future.

Sincerely,



Mark J. Nevenhoven, AIA
Partner



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