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Re: Letter of recommendation for Nathan Wright  
Business Record Forty Under 40 Nomination

Business Publications Corporation  
100 SW 4th Street  
Des Moines, IA 50309

January 10, 2017

Dear Review Committee,

Nathan Wright is a talented individual that we are lucky to have in the Des Moines community. My interaction with him has been on a professional basis, through working with him as a speaker at an event or a conference. As a past board member of the Iowa chapter of the American Marketing Association (AMA Iowa), we were privileged to have Nathan's talents on the stage many times at our programs. Easy to work with, innovative and engaging, Nathan delivered every time.

Nathan has contributed a lot to the Des Moines economy, being an owner of Lava Row for many years and investing time in training and educating businesses across the state and the country. He is willing to take risks and invest in what he believes in, which makes Nathan Wright a strong candidate for this year's Forty Under 40 Class. He is entrepreneurial in spirit, an innovator and willing to take risks to better himself and those around him. This makes him a unique and solid candidate for Forty Under 40.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Angela Ten Clay".

Angela Ten Clay  
2016 Forty Under 40 Honoree

I've had the pleasure of knowing Nathan T. Wright in a variety of roles, from a competitor to a client, as a peer and a friend.

While I was at Lessing-Flynn Advertising, Nathan the competitor was blazing a social media and digital marketing trail in Des Moines. With the advent of Lava Row, he had created the first social media focused firm in Des Moines and became the voice everyone looked to for guidance, education and great ideas. In many ways, that's still true today.

And while I respected his work, I hated learning he was a competitor in a pitch. Finishing 2<sup>nd</sup> stinks, and I did a lot of that when Nathan and I went head-to-head. I've never told him that I worked harder because of him. I wanted to be better because he already was.

Around the same time I joined The Meyocks Group in 2013, Nathan the competitor became the Nathan the client. As Digital Marketing and Innovation Director for Hy-Vee, a role they created specifically for him, Nathan took one of Iowa's greatest brands to new heights with his work in social and digital work. Hy-Vee will be better for years to come from the foundation Nathan implemented during the time he spent there. No small feat.

Nathan the peer and a friend is someone I can always count on. Whether it's advice on being an Adjunct Professor at Drake (I followed Nathan down this path) or bouncing digital ideas off a trusted peer, Nathan always has the goods. When I was the president of AMA Iowa, he was always happy to jump on a panel or be the keynote speaker at one of larger events.

Nathan is an active member of the community through his work with Greenlee Alumni and Friends at Iowa State University and his work with the Interactive Digital Studies Advisory Board at the University of Northern Iowa. He's a respected public speaker, both locally and nationally.

When I was asked to write this letter of recommendation for Nathan T. Wright to be considered for the Business Record's Forty Under 40 class of 2017 I was surprised. -But only because I assumed he had been given this honor long ago! I would imagine others in the community might have a similar reaction.

Nathan would make a fine addition to the Forty Under 40 class of 2017. He has made a huge impression on me, the Des Moines community and all that have had the pleasure of knowing him.

Regards,

Josh Fleming  
Business Record Forty Under 40 Class of 2013



615 3RD STREET, STE 300  
DES MOINES, IA 50309  
515 221 4900

TRILIXGROUP.COM



To the nominating committee,

I've known Nathan over the almost eight years I've been in Des Moines to be a leader in the marketing and digital arena. Nathan has been a competitor of mine while at his agency, but also someone I've looked up to. I have admired Nathan for his confidence in taking risks, his entrepreneurial mindedness, and willingness to share his knowledge and skills with those around him.

Nathan made his big moves in the Des Moines-area by launching his own business, managing multiple local and regional clients and leading two employees during the operation of Lava Row. As the founder of Lava Row, a digital marketing agency in Des Moines from 2007–2013, Nathan lead many clients into the digital and social age of marketing and communications.

One of the ways that I've looked up to Nathan is in his ability to share the latest market trends and help educate those around him (students, competitors, peers, etc.) on how to successfully use the newest tools and technology available in the digital marketing world. His knowledge and time were shared through numerous speaking engagements and event appearances that I either attended or help organize. These volunteer efforts for local, educational nonprofit groups, make him a very community-minded businessman.

Nathan's experience at Lava Row lead one of his top clients to take him on as one of their own, showing the level of trust that his clients put in him and his work. As the head of Digital Marketing and Innovation for Hy-Vee (past client of Lava Row), Nathan guided Hy-Vee through multiple successful digital and social campaigns, including the ever popular, grassroots Hy-Chi era (Hy-Vee Chinese). This was one of my personal favorites!

Nathan's latest career move takes another entrepreneurial risk as he has ventured into a freelance career in illustration and custom prints – something I pride him in having the confidence and ability to take on himself. I hope that someday I possess the courage to make a decision like that and follow my heart to do something that I've always dreamed of doing. He's even published his first book as the author and illustrator, *The Adventures of Fatburg* (<https://www.amazon.com/Adventures-Fatberg-Nathan-T-Wright/dp/1523216042>).

I am greatly looking forward to what he continues to achieve (and what road he chooses to travel down next) in his exciting career. I believe Nathan is the perfect candidate to receive the Forty Under 40 honor and will continue to be a great asset to the city, people and future of the Des Moines community.

Best regards,

Ashley Danielson

Account Manager, Trilix

Business Record Forty Under 40, Class of 2015