

January 10, 2017

Business Record
100 4th Street
Des Moines, IA 50309

RE: Forty Under 40 – Shari Wood Cover letter

To Whom It May Concern:

I am delighted and honored that I have been nominated for Forty Under 40. I have a strong passion for helping others both professionally and personally. I am involved in various non-profit organizations. Volunteering and giving back to my community was not something that was instilled in me at a young age, but it is something I feel is important to instill in my daughter.

I sit on the Board of Directors for the Iowa Association of Legal Assistants and Paralegals (“IALA.P”), which is a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting and advancing the legal profession and the status of legal assistants and paralegals throughout the State of Iowa. I have been on the Board of Directors for 3 years. I currently serve as 2nd Vice President and Membership Director. In my current role, I develop programs to encourage membership and assist in keeping the legal community engaged with paralegals. I regularly speak at paralegal classes at Des Moines Area Community College. I previously served as Region Director for the Des Moines area. As Region Director, I led monthly meetings and invited different speakers from the legal community to speak to our group, which played an intricate role in assisting in further educating paralegals in the Des Moines community. During my time as Director, participation in monthly meetings increased by 50%. I organized socials to allow the opportunity for Paralegals to network which further strengthened their legal skills and widened their professional database. Additionally, I previously served as a Board of Director for Women and eDiscovery, which is a non-profit that focuses on providing women interested in legal technology with educational and networking opportunities.

While IALA.P is a professional state-wide organization affiliated with a national organization, my deepest passion is the other two organizations where I volunteer my time. I am currently on the Management team and serve as Membership Council Manager for Junior League of Des Moines (“JLDM”). JLDM is an organization of women committed to promoting volunteerism, developing the potential of women and improving communities through effective action and leadership of trained volunteers. I have previously served as Membership Recruitment Chair and as a member of the Recruitment Committee. Most of my efforts impact membership, whether it be planning new member socials and events, or focusing on retention of members. I have been involved in various fundraising efforts to support our mission. JLDM’s current project is human trafficking and we are working with a local safe home for girls in crisis. We are committed to helping the young women who have been impacted by this violence. I was recently elected to serve as a “Director At Large” member of the board for the upcoming 2017-2019 league years. I

am excited for the opportunity to continue to serve and am looking forward to being on the JLDM Board.

My husband and I are a “Big Duo” with the Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Iowa (“BBBS”) organization. We have been matched with our little brother for six years. Besides being a mother, this is by far the most rewarding and fulfilling experience. I can only hope that our mentoring will shape his future and empower him to succeed. My goal is that one day he will be a big and will be a strong role model for the next generation.

I previously served as a member of the match activities committee for BBBS for two years, planning activities for matches to do throughout Des Moines and making it more affordable for matches by further allowing new experiences for littles. During my time on the committee, we planned the annual Big Brother Big Sister picnic, Glo Golf outings, Science Center activities, and other fun experiences for littles.

My professional experience has mostly been in the legal field. I have worked in large, prestigious law firms in Chicago and the best law firms in Des Moines. I was the first Intellectual Property Paralegal at BrownWinick where I managed an IP portfolio of 300-400 files. I led IP marketing meetings and had a very active role in marketing our services to potential and current clients.

In my current role at American Equity Investment Life Insurance Company, a publicly traded company in Des Moines, I manage corporate governance matters for the Company and its subsidiaries. I work closely with the General Counsel, Chief Executive Officer, and the Board of Directors and handle filing and reporting with the Securities and Exchange Commission, as well as all things related to the Board of Directors and Board Meetings.

I previously worked at a large boutique IP law firm in Chicago and supported the Firm President. I was a key player on litigation teams that represented Fortune 500 companies in multi-million dollar lawsuits. It was there that I learned that 2:00 A.M. can feel like 2:00 P.M. when you are preparing for trial. There is nothing more rewarding than receiving a verdict in favor of our clients, especially when they are right.

One thing I have learned about Des Moines is that it is a great place to live and work. Des Moines is unique in that it offers young professionals opportunities to accelerate in their career much quicker than in other places.

I would be honored to be a Forty Under 40 and look forward to continuing to serve this wonder place I call home.

Sincerely,

Shari V. Wood