I am writing to recommend Paige Peterson for the Forty under 40 nomination. I have admired Paige’s extraordinary work for several years, but it wasn’t until after I Iost my daughter in 2011 when we became close friends. I know Paige has an established photography business and has proven her talents time and time again, but I would like to focus on what makes her exceptional, both professionally and personally.

As a birthday present to me in 2014, Paige purchased a brick along the “Yellow Brick Road” between Malo and the Des Moines Social Club, in honor of my daughter, Hannah. It was a very special tribute to our family, while at the same time, a benefit to the community. However, four months later when Paige devised a way to incorporate that brick into a Christmas card with my other two daughters, its significance became apparent. For the three years following our daughter’s death, we struggled with the thought of sending a card without Hannah on it. Paige was able to inspire us and create a way to tell our story, which is one that includes the daughter who will always be part of our family. Then, last year, I sat and watched (and cried) as Paige went to great lengths to compose a family photo with Hannah’s shadow, and to ensure the image was accurate and represented her true essence. There isn’t another photographer who I would trust with that task or my daughter’s memory. That photo was absolutely breathtaking and awe-inspiring. It was shared hundreds of times on social media, and The Iowa Donor Network asked to use the photo on their website and Facebook page.

I consider Paige to be more than a photographer. I see her more as a photojournalist. She is able to create and capture images in order to tell a visual story. Her skill and expertise has an invaluable impact on our community. She is a true professional with the intuition and compassion to establish a rapport with those on the other side of the lens.

Paige’s passion becomes most evident when she is called upon to give back to the community. Just recently, she took part in The Guardian Project (to help police officers improve community relations), and BACA (Bikers Against Child Abuse) for DSM Magazine. Paige has donated her services to numerous charities, including The Hannah Geneser Foundation for window safety, which was created in honor of our daughter.

Paige has chosen a career which comes with the demand and expectation to capture the beauty in a world that is not always so beautiful. She repeatedly rises to meet that challenge, and works hard to share her vision with all of us. That is why she deserves to be part of the inspiring group of Forty under 40 professionals.

Thank you for your consideration,

Shanda Boone Geneser