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*We're for you.*

January 6, 2014

Throughout my career I have worked with some of the most influential leaders in our community. I have watched many of them develop into great leaders from the time they came to Des Moines out of college. I have had the opportunity to mentor many people who have become great ambassadors for the city. It is this experience which gives me confidence to nominate Joe Stopulos for the "40 Under 40" award for 2014. Joe is an energetic, community-minded person who gives 110% to whatever he is involved with. He gives his time to bettering the Des Moines community because he is passionate about it. He is exactly what the next generation of leaders needs to be.

I met Joe back when he was applying for a job at Holmes Murphy & Associates. In my first meeting with him, I knew he had the passion and enthusiasm needed to be great. Not just a great producer at Holmes Murphy, but a great leader in Des Moines. He was like a young wild colt with a mountain of potential and we needed to help focus his energy into the areas in which he could be the most impactful. After a few months of mentoring him, I knew we made the right decision in hiring him. He wrote a large account in a shorter amount of time than I had ever seen at Holmes Murphy (which was 30+ years). This gave us great confidence he would succeed at his job as a producer.

As I worked with him during my final months at Holmes Murphy, I knew he would be special. He was about a year out of college and had already made an impact at Holmes Murphy and in the community. He was also involved in many organizations and had started one as well. Within months of moving to Des Moines, he started the Des Moines Marquette Alumni Club. He called the university and asked if there was an alumni club in the area. When they said, "no", he asked if he could start one. From there, he literally called every alum and student in the area (over 100 people) and formed the club. It is initiative like this that showed me he was going to be a positive force in the community.

Naturally, after I left Holmes Murphy many of my mentor relationships ended. But Joe did not let ours end. Rather, he called me up about a week after and asked to get together. Since then, we have been meeting off and on to talk about how best to make a positive impact on the community of Des Moines and the State of Iowa. His enthusiasm for helping others is evident in his actions. He is involved in a variety of organizations and has a leadership role in many of them. One of the most recent examples was his involvement with the Greater Des Moines Leadership Institute. For their class project, Joe was on the team whose job it was to raise the funds for the project to renovate the House of Mercy (and it was not a small amount of money). During one of their meetings at La Mie, he called me over and asked me to help them brainstorm ideas to them accomplish their goal. I watched Joe, and the others, work diligently on the project. When Joe came to me a month later to ask for a donation, his passion for the project and those who it was going to help was obvious by his words and enthusiasm.

I am still very active in my service to Des Moines. As I try to groom the next generation, Joe is one of the people I reach out to when I am looking to bring young leaders together. Joe has a great network of motivated, community-focused, young people that he has created from his own involvement within our community.

As you select recipients for the 2014 "40 Under 40" awards, you are recognizing the best and brightest in our great community. You are highlighting those who make Des Moines a great place to live and city to be proud of. You are giving people lofty examples to live up to. You want to choose individuals who will inspire others to be great. You want individuals who are leaders today and will be leaders tomorrow. Joe Stopulos is one of those people.

Regards,

Doug Reichardt  
Chairman Emeritus

Des Moines  
Cedar Rapids  
Dallas  
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