



Jan. 4, 2018

Dear "40 Under 40" Selection Committee,

As I sit to write this nomination for Matt Coen, I'm actually shocked he hasn't already been recognized as a "40 Under 40" leader in Des Moines. Matt is the definition of a civic-minded professional. He is at the nucleus of revitalization efforts of The Avenues of Ingersoll & Grand, the business district along which he lives and works. As he seeks to elevate this corner of Des Moines as a hub of culture and commerce, he weaves a more vibrant community we all can enjoy.

Matt's passion for Des Moines, and his professional knowledge as an architect are indispensable when it comes to mapping plans for progress along the corridor. He knows how to inspire a shared vision for the district, and because he is both professionally connected with city planners and involved as a leader in the Des Moines Westside Chamber of Commerce, The Avenues SSMID and its supporting nonprofit organization, he has strong relationships with all the key players who can move that vision forward.

Matt's generosity of spirit endears him to all who know him. I first met Matt when I was starting out as a reporter for Juice Magazine, and he quickly became someone who I considered a personal "champion" – connecting me to opportunities to write for *Iowa Architect* Magazine, and to serve alongside him and the amazing Avenues team. When someone like Matt sees potential – in a space, a person, a connection, he does his best to bring it to fruition.

Matt sees benefits in building relationships as much as he does structures. He's participated in the Greater Des Moines Leadership Institute and served as a board member for the Greater Des Moines Partnership. He is a Rotarian and past member of the United Way Emerging Leader Initiative. He's strengthened the landscape with projects like the Flynn Wright building in the Western Gateway.

My only thought as to why Matt hasn't yet been recognized by the '40 Under 40' Committee is that he's someone who flies under the radar because he always defers credit to those around him. He's a humble guy who does what he does not in order to win awards but because it's the kind and generous thing to do. Someone who is always willing to pitch in and take care of minute details and the heavy lifting needed to achieve a master plan. Matt Coen represents the best of Des Moines, and it's a great pleasure to submit this recommendation on his behalf.

Respectfully,

Brianne Sanchez

Community & Public Affairs Manager, Des Moines University