January 8, 2018

To The Nominating Committee:

I am honored to write a letter of recommendation for Michelle Wilke to be considered as a member of the Forty Under 40 class of 2018. For the past year, I had the opportunity to get to know Michelle through our joint work on a volunteer committee and through our mutual Central College connections. Michelle deserves to be considered as an outstanding candidate for this recognition.

We worked together on the major fundraising event for Planned Parenthood last June. As one of the tri-chairs for this event, Michelle was an asset to the committee because of her energy, social media skills, and passion to help us succeed. Based on my experience working with a wide range of people, Michelle is exceptionally gifted in her ability to connect with people and make things happen. Her skills include:

* An ability to build meaningful relationships and make an impact within the community in a short amount of time.
* Willingness to dive right in, get her hands dirty and work hard.
* Commitment and dedication to causes she believes in and supports.

As you can see from her resume, Michelle has major responsibilities as the Corporate Relations and Major Gifts Officer at Central College. Since I taught and commuted to Central College from Des Moines for three decades, I know the time and energy required. Yet, she finds time and has the interest to be involved in the Des Moines community while driving two hours a day to Pella. She recently accepted a board position with the I Have A Dream Foundation and sought out this organization because of her heart for the students it serves.

She is a first-generation college student who has experienced firsthand how education can open many doors, and as a result she is passionate about lifting the mission at I Have A Dream to address college/career readiness to some of Iowa’s most vulnerable populations. Her life experience will provide a unique perspective to the board.

As you review her resume and application, please take note of how Michelle has already received recognition for her community work during her relatively short career. These awards and community involvement required Michelle to lead her life and manage her time in ways that allowed her to grow both personally and professionally.

It pleases me to support Michelle’s nomination. She is a person who is a pleasure to be around because her enthusiasm and optimism is contagious. Being recognized as a member of the Forty Under 40 Class of 2018 would enable Michelle to continue to grow in ways that benefit her and our greater community.

Please contact me if you need additional information.

Sincerely,

Jann E. Freed, PhD

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