



1/9/18

Forty Under 40
Business Record
The Depot at 4th,
100 4th Street,
Des Moines, Iowa 50309

Members of the Forty Under 40 Committee,

I am humbled at my nomination for *Forty Under 40* by my supervisor, Shannon Strickler. The following is an executive summary of my professional career, military career, and community involvement. The letters of recommendation found in the packet will speak to the quality of my involvement. I will focus on providing an outline of my career in a narrative form.

Professional Career

My legal and political career started at the University of South Dakota. During college, much of my career was focused on political work. My experience includes interning in Washington DC for a US Senator and US Congresswoman, working for a state political party, running legislative races, and working for the South Dakota State Legislature. I shifted focus from politics to law when I was accepted to Drake Law School in Des Moines in 2012.

I attended Drake Law School with the goal of receiving a Legislative Certificate and focusing on a career in policy development and implementation. During law school, I worked for a multi-client lobbyist tracking legislation, the government agency Iowa Title Guaranty where I updated their administrative rules, and two separate associations where I focused on net metering and Iowa's water quality. Upon graduating, *with honors*, from Drake Law School in 2015 and passing the Iowa Bar, I accepted a position with LeadingAge Iowa (LAI).

LAI is a statewide membership organization of non-profit providers of aging services with a mission to be the voice, support, and connector for non-profit members and the people they serve. LAI's membership represents the spectrum of non-profit long-term support and service (LTSS) providers including skilled nursing, assisted and independent living, PACE, home health, adult day, respite, hospice and home delivered meals.

I serve as the Director of Government Relations and Membership Services for the association. In my capacity, I act as the association's lobbyist at the Iowa Capitol during legislative session and work to develop and implement policy that benefits aging services and the people they serve. Topics I work on include: LTSS financing, workforce shortages, aging demographic trends, home and community-based services (HCBS), and many others. In addition to my legislative and policy role, I provide legal and regulatory advice to members of the association.



Military Career

In 2015, I began the application process to serve in the US Armed Forces in the capacity of a Judge Advocate (JAG) officer. JAG officers are lawyers of the military and enforce the Uniform Code of Military Justice, provide legal assistance to Soldiers and their families, and advise commanders and help them define the rules of engagement in operational setting. JAG officers can either serve in an active duty capacity or part-time with the reserves or National Guard.

I was officially sworn in as a First Lieutenant on April 7, 2017 with the Iowa Army National Guard. I immediately started drilling the next month but would not leave for military training until October of that year. I left for four and a half months of training at Ft. Benning, Georgia and Charlottesville, Virginia. I returned to civilian life mid-February of 2018. Since returning to Iowa, I report and serve with the 67th Troop Command based in Iowa City on a part-time basis. I serve as the unit's Trial Counsel (TC). In my role as TC, I advise senior officers on different legal topics and concerns, support all Soldiers with legal assistance, and administer and participate in quasi-trials known as Separation Boards.

Community Involvement

Since coming to Iowa, I have participated in several community activities and groups. Currently, I serve on the following: President of the Urbandale 4th of July Celebration, VP of Community Relations for Young Variety, Commissioner with the Urbandale Civil Rights Commission, and a member of Toastmasters. I also served as the Civic Chair for Young Professionals Connection (YPC) in 2017 and Alumni Relations and At-Large board member for New Leaders Council (NLC) in 2014 and 2015. Additionally, I am a member of Plymouth Church in Des Moines.

My letters of recommendation will cover my involvement in greater detail, but some recent community achievements worth noting include: revamping the leadership and financial structure of the Urbandale 4th of July Celebration Committee, taking the lead on the Urbandale 4th of July Parade, chairing and implementing the inaugural *Young Variety Charity Concert*, raising thousands of dollars yearly for Variety with my "silly suit" fundraiser, and providing legal research for a welcoming statement for Urbandale.

Finally, I spend my free time with my beautiful wife, Alaina Blake, an optometrist in private practice in Waukee, and our two dogs. I am kept busy doing projects around the house, playing board games with friends, and cycling and staying active whenever I have the chance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matt Blake", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Matt Blake
Director, Government Relations and Membership Services
LeadingAge Iowa

MATTHEW D. BLAKE

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EDUCATION

Drake University Law School

Juris Doctorate; Legislative Certificate

Awards: *With Honors*

Activities: Negotiations Moot Court Team

Des Moines, IA

May 2015

University of South Dakota

Bachelor of Science, Degree in History and Political Science

Awards: *magna cum laude*, Phi Beta Kappa

Vermillion, SD

December 2011

BAR ADMISSION

Iowa State Bar, 2015

EXPERIENCE

LeadingAge Iowa

Director, Government Relations and Membership Service

West Des Moines, IA

November 2015 – Present

- Represent the association at the Iowa state legislature and prepare legislative priorities.
- Maintain relationships with key legislators, government entities, and other associations.
- Draft legislation and assist government entities with implementation of administrative rules.
- Act as the point of contact for the Managed Care Organizations and assist association members.
- Track, review, interpret, and comment on federal and state regulations related to the aging services industry.
- Actively support association members with any legal or regulatory questions and annually meet with association membership.
- Write weekly articles related to the Iowa legislature and state news for the association's newsletter.

Iowa Army National Guard

Judge Advocate (JAG Officer)

Camp Dodge, IA

April 2017 – Present

- Advise brigade commanders on legal, personnel, and operational issues.
- Perform separation actions against soldiers who violate the US Code or Iowa Code of Military Justice.

Iowa State Legislature, Senator Robert Dvorsky

Legal Intern; Clerk

Des Moines, IA

January - April 2014; April – May 2015

Iowa League of Cities

Environmental Policy Intern

Des Moines, IA

June 2014 – April 2015

Iowa Association of Municipal Utilities

Legal Intern

Des Moines, IA

June – August 2014

Iowa Title Guaranty

Legal Intern

Des Moines, IA

June 2013 – March 2014

J.A. Smith Law, LLC

Bill Tracker

Des Moines, IA

January – April 2013

South Dakota Legislature, House Democrats Office

Intern

Pierre, SD

January– March 2011

South Dakota State Candidates Tom Cool, Darrell Solberg, and Jim Larsen

Campaign Manager

Sioux Falls, SD

April–November 2010

US Senator Tim Johnson & Congresswoman Stephanie Herseth Sandlin

Intern

Washington D.C.

May – August 2009

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT & INTERESTS

Community Involvement: *President*, Urbandale Fourth of July Celebration Committee; *Commissioner*, Urbandale Civil Rights Commission; *Board Member*, Young Variety; *Member* –Early Risers Toastmasters Club; *Member*, Plymouth Church

Interests: Cycling, Strategy Games, Running, Board Games, Star Wars, Networking