

January 7, 2019

Dear *Des Moines Business Record* Forty Under 40 nominations committee,

I am writing to recommend Lauren Dixson for recognition of her accomplishments through the *Des Moines Business Record* Forty Under 40 award.

I first met Lauren in 2012, when we were both in leadership roles in separate regional chapters of an international professional association, Apra. Apra is the professional association serving people who provide data intelligence for philanthropic organizations through research, data analytics and data management, and prospect management. This was at a time when the chapter leaders had not been working together, communicating, or collaborating, and this meeting represented the first attempt to open dialogues between us. My first impression of Lauren was that she was deeply passionate about serving our profession. Lauren openly and vulnerably shared her experience of the challenges facing our chapters and was an active participant in identifying potential solutions. It was so refreshing to work with Lauren because she didn't act from a place of fear or territorialism; she didn't believe that someone else's gain was her loss. She was genuinely looking for ways to collaborate to better serve our profession.

Thus, the following year, when Lauren was appointed chair of Apra's annual international conference and she reached out to me to invite me to serve on the curriculum planning committee, I jumped at the opportunity. And this work together confirmed what I felt during our first meeting: Lauren is not only one of the most enthusiastic advocates for our profession that I've ever met, she's also an incredible embodiment of servant leadership. When Lauren is in a leadership role, her focus is on lifting and supporting those she's leading. She doesn't seek recognition for her own accomplishments, but passionately promotes the accomplishments of others. My role on Lauren's curriculum planning committee was my first volunteer role within Apra international, and it was an incredibly positive and affirming experience that propelled my engagement within the organization and deepened my commitment to it.

The year that Lauren chaired the conference, she was nominated and elected to serve as a member of Apra's board of directors. Board service is completely volunteer, and requires a significant investment of time. Her term started in fall of 2013. In 2016, when I was elected as a director, Lauren was serving as the treasurer and a member of the executive committee. It was such a joy to serve on the board with her. Consistent with my earlier experience, Lauren was a solutions-oriented collaborator who was deeply passionate about serving our members. Her board term ended in 2017, but her impact on the organization will be long lasting. Many current leaders within our organization, myself included, were initially engaged in volunteer opportunities because of Lauren. She also helped develop a strategic plan that guided the organization and helped it grow and thrive.

Lauren is one of the most unique leaders I've ever encountered, because she never self-promotes or uses her influence and authority in the service of her own ego. She is all about enabling others to rise. And her enthusiasm for her work and the work of our professional association infects everyone around her.

At the end of our first year volunteering together for Apra, Lauren wrote cards for every member of the curriculum planning committee. I'll never forget the card she sent me. It said, "I've got my eye on you—you're going to do great things." I chaired the conference myself in 2015 and am now the treasurer of the Apra board of directors. I know none of this would have happened without Lauren. Lauren helps others realize their potential. Her passion and commitment is sincere. She is service-oriented to the core of her being. I am so grateful for her influence in my life, and know that her positive influence within the philanthropic community has been widespread.

Lauren's passionate commitment to others deserves recognition, and I could not more enthusiastically recommend her as a recipient of the Forty Under 40 award.

With warmest regards,

Milagro (Misa) Lobato
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