

Michael R. Reck

Direct Dial: (515) 283-4645

Direct Fax: (515) 558-0645

E-mail: mrreck@belinmccormick.com

January 8, 2015

Jason Swanson
FORTY UNDER 40
Des Moines Business Record
100 Fourth Street
Des Moines, IA 50309

Dear Mr. Swanson:

I write to nominate Kelsey Knowles for the 2015 class of Forty Under 40. I have worked with Kelsey since 2007, when she joined us after clerking for Judge Ronald L. Longstaff of the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Iowa.

As an Iowan, born and raised, who also lived on the east coast, I know we, as Iowans, face challenges in perceptions. We take pride in who we are. As proud as we are of our state's rural and agricultural heritage, that is not, however, all we are. We offer an outstanding quality of life and ample business opportunities. Nonetheless, it remains a challenge to convince those from outside our state that we present opportunities that make us an attractive place to live. As a result, it can be difficult to recruit and attract top-tier professionals from elsewhere to our state and city despite the opportunities we offer.

Kelsey Knowles is a tremendous success story in terms of luring the top tier of her profession to our state. Kelsey is *not* originally from Iowa. Despite suffering this significant impediment, she nonetheless graduated *summa cum laude* from Arizona State University. She then went on to Boston College Law School where she also graduated *summa cum laude* and won virtually every award the school had to offer, including the Privitera Family Award for exceptional contribution to the Law School, the Dean Denis A. Dooley Award for the student with an outstanding scholarship average and the Wendell F. Grimes Award for outstanding work in advocacy competitions. She was a member of the 2004 National Craven Constitutional Moot Court Championship Team, repeating a national championship she also enjoyed in high school—a virtually unheard of accomplishment. She then went on to clerk for the Third Circuit Court of Appeals and the United States District Court for the Southern District of Iowa.

Kelsey established a record of academic achievement beyond exceptional. As a result, national firms vigorously sought her services. She ultimately faced a choice between the blue blood Boston firm of Ropes & Gray, or choosing to start her career in Des Moines, Iowa. She chose Des Moines and quickly established herself as one of the outstanding lawyers in our state, including gaining national recognition in *Chambers USA America's Leading Lawyers for*

January 8, 2015

Page 2

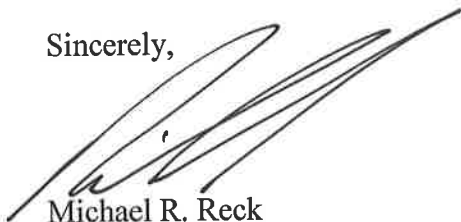
Business where she is now recognized as a tier 3 attorney for her labor and employment practice. Since 2010, Kelsey has served as the firm's hiring attorney and played an integral role in recruiting new attorneys to our firm, including helping the firm address a longstanding issue of successfully recruiting and retaining female attorneys. Kelsey also serves on our firm's Personnel Committee where she assists in handling personnel matters regarding both attorneys and staff. For the past two years Kelsey served as a member of the firm's Management Committee, a small committee that handles the firm's daily needs as well as longer-term strategic concerns. Like many businesses, our firm has faced transitions and challenges during the last few years and service on our management committee has required significant time and dedication. Older and younger lawyers alike seek Kelsey's calm, steady and insightful advice. She has become a true leader within our firm, while being well-liked by staff and attorneys alike.

Beyond being a leader, Kelsey also is an exceptional attorney. She has the rare gift to make the complex simple. Kelsey not only immediately grasps exceptionally complex concepts, but also tempers her advice with common sense. She approaches clients' problems with an understanding of their fears and needs, while offering cost-effective solutions. She is an effective, zealous advocate, while retaining civility and cordiality with opposing counsel. You will not find a better lawyer regardless of age.

Such professional accomplishment alone would be worthy of recognition as we try to attract talent of Kelsey's caliber to our state. Kelsey, however, is far more than a capable professional. She strives to give back to her adopted community in every way. She has participated in the Greater Des Moines Leadership Institute, where she tirelessly raised money for the 2012-13 class gift, supporting Amanda the Panda. She also serves on the Board for Living History Farms, including serving as Secretary for the last two years. She also serves on the Greater Des Moines Partnership's Regional Workforce Development/Education Committee. Kelsey also coached the Lincoln High School Mock Trial team, sharing her skills learned as a national champion with a team with fewer resources than those located in our more affluent suburbs.

Ultimately, nothing I write can do justice to Kelsey. She is a kind, generous person about whom you likely will find nobody who would say a negative word. I never have had the pleasure of working with anyone quite like her and do far more than recommend her without hesitation. I give her my absolute highest recommendation as a person, a professional and a leader. She is a truly exceptional person highly worthy of recognition.

Sincerely,



Michael R. Reck
For the Firm

MRR\tp

BELIN\P0776\0000\ltr Swanson 2013 01 04 (01470792).DOC