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Dr. Norman E. Borlaug
1914-2009

John Ruan
1914-2010

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Dr. Louise Fresco
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Michael Gartner
Pulitzer Prize Winner

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Dr. M.S. Swaminathan
*Chairman
Laureate Selection Committee*

THE WORLD FOOD PRIZE®

Jan. 9, 2015

Selection Committee
Des Moines Business Record Forty Under 40
100 4th Street
Des Moines, Iowa 50309

To the Selection Committee:

I am writing to provide my strongest possible recommendation for Megan Forgrave, Director of Communications for the World Food Prize Foundation, to be inducted into the Des Moines Business Record Forty Under 40 Class of 2015.

As a communications professional, Megan has masterfully navigated a stunning array of the most sensitive and complex topics on an international stage, including: Ebola, Iran, Biotechnology and GMOs, Arab/Israeli tensions, climate change, and the visit of Chinese President Xi Jinping when he spoke at our Hall of Laureates. I know of no other individual in our community who has had to deal with such a wide range of high-profile and often controversial issues and done so with such professionalism and effectiveness.

It has been my great pleasure to know and work with Megan ever since I personally chose her from more than 40 applicants in 2010 as our new Director of Communications. She has been our spokesperson on high-level matters and easily grasps the complexities and nuances of critical issues, whether in politics or science, which is invaluable, especially in this day and age of fast-paced information.

Megan is a passionate and dedicated leader who represents our state incredibly well on a global scale, working constantly to raise the profile of not only our foundation but also Des Moines and Iowa. She is a person I can call upon at any time, day or night, capable of drafting remarks for Jimmy Carter, warmly greeting the former President of Ghana, or welcoming a farmer from a small village in Uganda.

To understand the magnitude of her work, consider that the World Food Prize annually gathers more than 1,500 people from over 65 countries here in Des Moines for an entire week of events that includes the awarding of our \$250,000 prize in a televised ceremony at the magnificent Iowa State Capitol. The week also includes our Borlaug Dialogue international symposium, which shines a spotlight on hunger and food security issues around the world and the Iowa Hunger Summit, which brings attention to food insecure persons here at home. We work with everyone from international business executives and high-level governmental dignitaries to scientific researchers, NGO leaders and African smallholder farmers in putting on these events.

Megan's involvement over the past four years has ensured that we grow and flourish, and continue to build much broader name recognition and impact both here in our home state and around the globe. With her efforts, in recent years our award has come to be called "the Nobel Prize of Food and Agriculture," and our symposium has been referred to as "the premier conference in the world on global agriculture."

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One of the first things Megan did when she arrived at The World Food Prize was to transform our press center and enhance media relations during our annual events. She has collaborated with partner organizations, from the U.S. State Department to CropLife International to the Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting, to bring scores of international journalists to Iowa. In addition, she elevated our small press room with just tables and chairs to become an entirely independent operation of press conferences and interviews that she runs alongside our symposium. For example:

- This past year, she organized and led the first ever press conference on Ebola and its impact on the African food supply, which was webcast and received worldwide attention as we provided a speaking platform for our guests who included: the president of the United Nations agency, the International Fund for Agricultural Development; the Ministers of Agriculture from Liberia and Sierra Leone, both countries that have been devastated by this virus; and myself. Following that groundbreaking event, she also arranged an interview for me with CNN, broadcast live from Des Moines on this same subject.
- Over the past year, Megan also played an instrumental role in organizing the participation of former British Prime Minister Tony Blair in our symposium. In 2013, she orchestrated and moderated the press conference and media availabilities for both Mr. Blair and Howard G. Buffett surrounding their partnership with the World Food Prize to create the new 40 Chances Fellowships for young entrepreneurs with projects to address hunger and poverty in Africa. Each recipient would receive \$150,000 in start-up support. Then, this past fall, she set up a globally webcast press conference introducing the four winners and their projects, and publicized their awards internationally. She also coordinated the publicity for a related aspect of this project, Howard G. Buffett's donation of a stunning photography exhibit to our Hall of Laureates, and was involved in coordinating the grand opening of that exhibit.
- Megan is my sole and trusted advisor on all matters related to the media and public outreach. She has my complete confidence to speak to the press on our organization's behalf on contentious issues such as: when I traveled to Iran and subsequently invited a top Iranian scientist to speak here at the World Food Prize; GMOs, when the World Food Prize awarded the pioneers of biotechnology with our Prize in 2013; and Arab/Israeli tensions, when we honored the dryland irrigation scientist Dr. Daniel Hillel in 2012, with both Arabs and Israelis celebrating him together here in the audience at the Iowa State Capitol.

Through her work with the media and in coordinating special events, Megan has catapulted both our foundation and Central Iowa into the spotlight via some of the largest news outlets in the world. In the realm of media and public relations, she is the consummate professional, understands as only a former journalist could how to pitch great stories, and is able to appeal to diverse audiences. Our news coverage builds every year, and has ranged from coverage of the 2013 World Food Prize Laureates on the front page of the Business Section in the New York Times to a feature on the State of Iowa's new Norman Borlaug Statue in the U.S. Capitol in the Washington Post last March.

When it came time to coordinate all of our activities this past year for the Norman Borlaug Centennial, I asked Megan to take the lead, and she again did a superlative job.

- She served as spokesperson for me in my role as Chair of the State of Iowa's Norman Borlaug Statue Committee. In that capacity, she worked directly with officials at the U.S. Capitol and Speaker of the House's office on sensitive, bipartisan details surrounding the unveiling ceremony for the Norman Borlaug Statue. In that same manner, she also worked closely over several months with the Governor of Iowa's office and the Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs, as well as with the documentary producers from Iowa Public Television, to coordinate numerous related events in Washington, D.C. She was one of only two staff members whom I chose to travel there to ensure the historic March 25th statue unveiling and other events ran flawlessly.
- During that same period, she also served as our primary communications coordinator with other partners around the globe who also celebrated Norman Borlaug on what would have been his 100th birthday, ranging from the weeklong conference at his CIMMYT agricultural research center in Mexico to a symposium for youth we helped organize at the U.S. Department of Agriculture, at which World Food Prize staff participated.

- Displaying her digital expertise, Megan oversaw the creation of a new Norman Borlaug Centennial section of our website, and worked with our web designers to develop a customized interactive map and a campaign inviting people to share how they will continue Dr. Borlaug's legacy of feeding the world. She was also the producer and director of two superb videos that we created about Dr. Borlaug's life, gathering assets from around the world to include, as well as several other short film features we have produced about our laureates, our youth alumni, and other World Food Prize programs.
- Locally, Megan coordinated several public outreach efforts surrounding the Borlaug Centennial, from special international dance performances, meal packaging and other activities at our Hall of Laureates headquarters, to asking restaurants to create special Borlaug menu items. In an especially memorable initiative, Megan took the personal initiative working with Madhouse Brewery to brew a special limited edition "Borlauger" beer, which was a huge hit with international participants at the 2014 World Food Prize international symposium.

All of these events significantly raised the profile of Dr. Borlaug, The World Food Prize which he founded, and most significantly, Des Moines and Central Iowa.

Special projects such as these are not unusual for Megan to take on.

- Over a period of three years, Megan played an integral role in curating and editing every photo, video and word in the \$1 million interactive educational exhibits we unveiled at our Hall of Laureates, which allow visitors and especially school children to explore the world of food and agriculture and learn about Iowa's amazing humanitarian heritage.
- Likewise, she oversaw all of our communications, publicity and media outreach when we opened the \$30 million World Food Prize Hall of Laureates in 2011, gaining us broad attention for transforming a century-old building on the National Register of Historic Places into a LEED Platinum model for energy efficiency.
- She has also worked closely with our youth education team as we have built the new Iowa Youth Institute, promoted STEM education, and marketed our youth programs to high school students and teachers. In just three years, we have earned participation from half the schools across the state with the goal of reaching every school in the next few years.

Finally, one other integral asset Megan has brought to our staff is a sincere interest in building our community. She was accepted to Drake University's first Alumni Executive Roundtable and has been our representative to the Des Moines Downtown Chamber for several years, both of which have allowed her to build valuable bridges with other leaders and organizations in the community and led us to offer new events for the public. In addition, she:

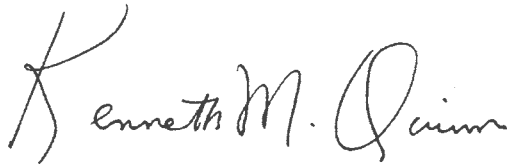
- Served on the Downtown Chamber's Event Planning Committee, helping to create the first Culture Crawl, which has now become their signature fundraising event, and which the World Food Prize hosted at our headquarters free of charge this year.
- Built a partnership between our organization and both the Science Center of Iowa and the Des Moines Botanical Gardens to create a series of Earth Day activities throughout downtown for families.
- Is often the instigator urging the World Food Prize team to offer more free, public programming. She has coordinated public lectures by leading international journalists and special events during our open houses such as dance performances and food drives. In short, she has utilized the World Food Prize organization as a tool to create new events and programs for the community with the goal of both educating and entertaining community members of all ages.
- Megan has also coordinated activities, volunteers and interns to ensure the World Food Prize's participation in local events such as the Des Moines Arts Festival, the World Food Festival, Blank Park Zoo events and the

Downtown Farmers' Market, among others. In the past, Megan has also given her personal time to read with elementary students because she finds it so rewarding, has done foreign language interpretation for local families, and has spoken to various classes ranging from elementary school students to university students.

In sum, Megan has distinguished herself as an exceptional professional and a leader who cares greatly about building and improving our community. Megan has one of the strongest work ethics I know, diligently working until late at night until a project is finished perfectly. Every person on our staff utilizes her communications expertise, whether to solicit nominations for our prize from every continent or to reach out to every Iowa high school to promote STEM education through our rapidly growing youth programs. We would not be where we are today without her.

I have long considered the Forty Under 40 recipients as role models for other young professionals who are just beginning their careers. They are the individuals who set the standard for dedication, hard work and commitment to the community. For all of the reasons outlined in this letter, Megan Forgrave is indeed one of those exceptional individuals, most worthy of being emulated. As such, she truly deserves to be included in the 2015 Class of Forty Under 40. I reiterate my unreserved and total support for her selection.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kenneth M. Quinn". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Ambassador Kenneth M. Quinn (ret.)
President, The World Food Prize Foundation