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May 27, 2014

Dear Selection Committee:

I'm pleased to write this letter in support of Emily Abbas' consideration for the Des Moines Business Records' "Emerging Woman of Influence Award." I've had the pleasure of knowing Emily for more than a dozen years, as she worked as GuideOne's Corporate Communications Manager during the 2000s.

I can attest to Emily being a very deserving recipient of this prestigious award. Here are just a few reasons why I think you can be proud to bestow this award on Emily:

- She is a talented and respected communications professional, who has steadily climbed the ranks at every company she's worked at.
- She is a prominent figure in the public relations industry in Des Moines, having served as president of the local Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) chapter, along with many other roles.
- She's a dedicated community volunteer who has given her time and talents to a large number of local nonprofit organizations and causes.
- She's a young leader, who has been recognized with the Des Moines Business Record's "40 Under 40" Young Business Leader Award, and is a graduate of the Greater Des Moines Leadership Institute.

In addition, while at GuideOne Emily had occasion to lead two very important and visible public safety campaigns on the company's behalf. First, she worked with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and the National Transportation Safety Board on 15-passenger van rollover issues. She was even invited to Washington, DC when national legislation was introduced on this topic.

Also while at GuideOne, she was a founding member of the statewide public-private coalition that successfully campaigned to lower Iowa's legal blood alcohol limit for drivers from .08 to .10, saving many lives.

Finally, through my involvement with Drake, I have seen first-hand Emily's passion for the university and students. She has taken on a prestigious national leadership role as President of the Alumni Board but also still takes time to share her time and talent in classrooms and with student organizations.

I recommend Emily for this award with the highest confidence. If you should have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 515-267-5702 and I would be happy to discuss further.

Best regards,



Jim Wallace
Chairman, President & CEO



May 30, 2014

To Whom It May Concern:

It is with great pleasure that we support the nomination of Emily Abbas as the first-ever selected "Emerging Woman of Influence."

Emily is an excellent candidate who is destined to become part of the next generation of respected leaders in our community. As a young professional, Emily's tireless, passionate involvement in fundraising events for The Playhouse and other organizations sets a bar that is hard to match.

During the last several years, Emily has shown significant professional and volunteer leadership as:

- Playhouse Board President (one of the youngest ever), during a pivotal time
- Executive Director of Public Relations at Strategic America
- National "Young Alumni of the Year" award winner from Drake in 2013
- Adjunct Professor, teaching undergrad and grad PR/communications classes at Drake and Simpson
- Chair of the Des Moines Symphony Pops 4th of July Viewing Party (twice)
- Member of "Forty Under 40" at the age of 29

She is well on her way to becoming one of the strongest forces in the cultural life of Des Moines – a leader whose participation virtually assures success. As the Chair of The Playhouse Board, she has, in a few short months, presided over record-breaking ticket sales, opening of our new lobby, doubled the size of our board with eager, engaged professionals, and led a strategic planning effort that will help guarantee a successful future.

Emily leads by doing, and her tireless work ethic and commitment to philanthropy not only set the bar high for the board she leads, but also make success seem achievable, if not inevitable.

It is because of these amazing achievements and the promise of doing even more for the community, that we strongly endorse Emily Abbas for the 2014 "Emerging Woman of Influence" Award.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Viars".

John Viars
Executive Director

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kim Walker".

Kim Walker
Capital Campaign
Co-Chair

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Debbie Hubbell".

Debbie Hubbell
Capital Campaign
Co-Chair

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gerard Neugent".

Gerard Neugent
Capital Campaign
Co-Chair

June 2, 2014

Dear Selection Committee,

Please accept this letter as my full endorsement and recommendation for Emily Abbas to be considered for the Des Moines Woman of Influence Award in 2014.

Emily, a two time graduate of Drake University, has served the institution tirelessly as a volunteer and, recently, as a faculty member with our students. As a member of the National Alumni Board of Directors, Emily has led our newest and most aggressive initiatives with our student alumni programming as Chair of the Student Relations committee. Under her tenure, this committee helped to establish the Student Alumni Association (SAA) as the largest student organization on campus and provided countless hours of support to ensure their success. During her time as Chair of this committee, it was recognized as national program of the year by the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education's Associated Student Advancement Programs. In addition, it launched a new campus giving program that, in 2014, gained the financial participation of almost 20% of the student body and raised in excess of \$19,000 for student scholarships.

In recognition and acknowledgement of leadership, this past spring, Emily was elected to serve as the youngest President on record of the National Alumni Board of Directors. This advisory board, consisting of representative members of Drake's 70,000 graduates, provides the leadership and vision for the implementation of Drake's Alumni Relations Strategic Plan and supports the efforts of the entire Drake community.

Emily has been an inspirational leader for Drake University, both locally as well as nationally. Her commitment is recognized and respected by her fellow graduates and she is dedicated to advancing the needs of both Drake students and alumni.

We are privileged to have her as a part of our efforts and believe that she embodies all the criteria necessary to be recognized with this prestigious award. Please offer her your fullest review and consideration.

Sincerely,

Blake Campbell
Director, Alumni Relations
Drake University