

June 3, 2014

To the Selection Committee:

I am pleased to offer my unqualified recommendation for Ann Sobiech Munson to receive the 2014 Meredith Emerging Women of Influence Award. Ann is a respected colleague who is recognized for a diverse set of talents: technical expertise, communication ability, and leadership skills. Each of these skill sets is rare – particularly at the level Ann possesses – but to have all three is unique and makes her an invaluable member of our profession and an important citizen for Central Iowa.

Architecture, like many professions, is undergoing profound and rapid change. Architects used to make “drawings”. Today, architects assemble a massive amount of virtual information – in effect we now construct buildings in a virtual world prior to building them in the real world. Ann has been at the forefront of these developments. She leads our firm’s Building Information Group dedicated to managing this information, and has been truly innovative. As a result of her work, our firm has developed a process for integrating product information and specifications that has become the model for firms in Central Iowa. She has impacted not only our firm, but the larger profession in substantive ways.

This technical expertise alone is impressive, but Ann couples this knowledge with an ability to clearly communicate new and often difficult processes to our staff and our clients. We all know stories of technocrats who keep knowledge to themselves like a prized possession. Ann is the opposite. She makes her vast knowledge readily available to others – our staff, our clients, and the general public. This, undoubtedly, grows out of her experience teaching at Iowa State University. She is a natural educator, inspiring those around her to learn and grow.

Finally, and most importantly, Ann is a leader. She co-founded Iowa Women in Architecture (iaWia) as a way of addressing the historic gender inequities in our profession. This group, associated with the Iowa Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, regularly organizes conference speakers to discuss relevant topics and affect change. In recognition, Iowa State University’s College of Design presented Ann with the 2013 Design Achievement Award. If that wasn’t enough, Ann is now serving the public on the City Council for the City of Slater, Iowa. She clearly understands her talents and is sharing them in service to her fellow citizens.

This brief summary of Ann’s abilities may sound like three different individuals – a technologist, a communicator, and a leader. Fortunately for our firm, our profession, and the public it is one individual’s vitae. I feel fortunate to work with Ann and to learn from her every day. I can think of no more deserving individual than Ann Sobiech Munson to receive the 2014 Meredith Emerging Women of Influence Award. I hope, after reviewing her remarkable qualifications, the Committee shares my view. Thank you for your thoughtful consideration.

Sincerely,



Paul D. Mankins, FAIA, LEED AP
Firm Principal