The Business Record and dsm Magazine’s Sages over 70 Nomination

To Whom It May Concern:

It is with great pleasure that I recommend Dr. Donald Adams for The Business Record and dsm Magazine’s Sages` over 70 award. For the past 45 years, Don has had a significant impact on Drake University, leadership development, and the lives of students. Not only have I benefited from Don’s passion for leadership development, but I have also had the privileged to learn from Don as a mentor.

Don “The Bulldog” Adams, is a name easily recognized within the Drake community. Whether you know him through a personal connection, stories of his time on campus, or his leadership academy, Don is a Drake legend. I first met Don during a student leadership retreat in my sophomore year at Drake. While he was not directly involved with the retreat, Don stopped by to get to know the student leaders on campus. He walked around the room and made an effort to not only introduce himself to each student, but also spent time getting to know our interests and goals. From that day forward, any time I encountered Don on campus, he greeted me by name and would recall past conversations we had shared.

Don’s genuine interest in my experiences as a student and personal goals was a defining moment in my Drake experience. His passion for students was a big influence in my decision to pursue a career in higher education. He repeatedly demonstrated the impact passionate, caring, and determined individuals could have on the lives of students. Don was one of my biggest supporters when I made the decision to pursue a career in higher education. His advice, encouragement, and support were invaluable as I progressed through my graduate program. As I soon came to find out from colleagues, mentors with the wealth of knowledge and experiences of Don Adams, were few and far between.

When I returned to Drake in my first professional role, Don once again took me under his wing to assist in my transition. He connected me with faculty and staff across campus to help me build a strong network within the Drake community. In addition, he recommended me for a variety of campus committees to ensure I was gaining professional experiences in many different areas within higher education. Don was also a big supporter in my decision to pursue a doctoral degree in education. Throughout my program, he has provided strategies for succeeding in a doctoral program and advice for conquering the dissertation process. His passion for life-long learning motivates me to push myself in the classroom and as a professional. I can confidently say that I am a better practitioner today because of the time he has invested in my professional development.

I know my experience with Don is not unique. His legacy on campus is evident through the stories of current students and alumni, as well as the lasting impact he has had on student leadership development at Drake. Through the Donald V. Adams Leadership Academy, he continues to inspire students to become leaders in their chosen career fields. Through his six personal values, take responsibility, be honest and dependable, be persistence, preserve your options, never stop learning, and love unconditionally, he inspires young people to envision themselves as leadership and aspire to make positive change in the world. With over 100 graduates from the academy each academic year, Don’s legacy will carry on for generations to come.

Don Adams is a remarkable person. He is well respected by all who have had the opportunity to meet him. His passion for students and the Drake community is evident by his 45 years of service to the university. I am blessed to have Don as my mentor. I cannot think of a person who is more deserving of your Sages over 70 award than Don Adams. Thank you for consideration of his nomination.

Sincerely,

Jenny Tran-Johnson

Assistant Dean, College of Arts & Sciences

Drake University

jennifer.tran@drake.edu