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To Whom It May Concern:

It is with great honor and enthusiasm that I formally recommend Stacy Alley for the Outstanding Commitment to Teaching Award at The University of Alabama. My name is Bailey Blaise Mariea, and I graduated Summa Cum Laude from The University of Alabama in 2017 with a BA in Acting (on the musical theatre track) and was an active member of the Honors College.

I first met Stacy when I was only a senior in high school making my rounds auditioning for many of the country's best musical theatre programs. Stacy was the first professor I had the pleasure of meeting upon my arrival at my UA audition where I was able to take part first hand in a dance class and sit in on one of Stacy's rehearsals for her production of *Show Boat*. I had an immediate admiration and kind of awe for Stacy's natural ability to command respect from everyone in the room – it was immediately evident to me that Stacy was going to be the kind of mentor, professor, and director who students never wanted to let down. I would be doing an extreme disservice if I failed to mention that my audition weekend meeting with Stacy contributed to my ultimate decision to attend The University of Alabama.

My initial impressions of Stacy rang true throughout my entire four years being taught by, directed by, and advised by Stacy. Stacy's aptitude in the classroom needs no dressing up – her effect on her students is apparent through the continued (and exponentially growing) successes of UA Theatre & Dance alumni actively working in one of the most difficult industries to break in to. What separates Stacy as a professor is her commitment to students outside of the classroom. It's easy to see your students simply as your students – people you see a couple hours for a few days of the week, who you simply impart your knowledge upon - but I can firmly attest that Stacy goes above and beyond to recognize each student first and foremost as a human and artist with individual strengths, needs, and abilities. I've seen her help dancers find and explore their voice for the first time, and I've seen her take a Don Rickles emulator with two left feet and turn him into a tap dancing fiend! There is no one she can't help. She makes herself available to her students 24/7 – there is no further mark for commitment. That is what separates a teacher from a true, lifelong mentor.

My personal experience throughout my training in the Musical Theatre had its fair share of ups and downs, and this is the time when your professors truly are the forces behind shaping you as an actor and performer. What I admire most about Stacy was her unfaltering ability to give you the honest truth. She doesn't sugar coat,

and she doesn't coddle – it makes her constructive criticism and commendation mean that much more. Because of this, I've always been able to trust her. While it's certainly nice to be coddled and applauded, Stacy was the teacher who always found a way to offer constructive criticism and who wasn't afraid to be honest with you in times when sometimes you were too afraid of being honest with yourself. While Stacy certainly is admired by all her students, she doesn't put her popularity with students first. To me, that is one heck of a risk to take – and one of the most admirable qualities about her. She courageously does what's necessary to help her students become the best versions of themselves.

On a personal note, Stacy is also one of the most compassionate and accepting humans I've ever met. Her sincerity and moral integrity is unparalleled, and her commitment to social justice and equality inspires each and every student who walks into her classroom. Stacy was someone I could go to for some of the most difficult decisions I had to make in college. She was with me through some rather confused periods of my life and training, especially when dealing with potentially career altering injuries. When I truly needed it most, Stacy was always my cheerleader. More importantly, she also kept my feet on the ground.

Obviously, I could list many reasons why Stacy deserves to be awarded the Outstanding Commitment to Teaching Award. First and foremost, Stacy truly loves this industry we're in, and she understands it better than anyone (as she herself spent years working as a professional actress and dancer). Her years of dedication to the craft make her an invaluable font of knowledge to her students; she has prepared me in more ways than I can possibly begin to put in this letter. Not once in my professional career as a young actor in New York City have I found myself at a disadvantage because there was something more that Stacy could have taught me – and that's rare to be able to say.

There's an old quote about how you can't measure the success and impression of a President until 10 years later – well I think this sentiment also applies to the work of a teacher. I've now been out of school for 9 months and am only beginning this path, but I can't begin to count the number of times I have found myself saying "Wow.... Stacy was absolutely right! Again!" Living in New York City and being in the center of this industry is a daunting, emotional, and precarious roller coaster of uncertainty and doubt. To be entirely honest, Stacy prepared me to confront this more than anyone else. Skills and training are certainly one very vital part of our profession, but what's extremely hard to teach is how to cope with the trials and tribulations of show business. Stacy's grasp and understanding of preparing students for the real world sets her part.

I will always regard Stacy as one of the reasons I had the best and most transformative four years of my life. Thanks to her, I continue to fall in love with the theatre each day, and I'm working harder than ever to make it in this industry even when all the odds may appear to be stacked against me. She is a friend and a mentor,

even though I am no longer technically her “student.” I feel comfortable asking her for help, even now – and know that she will always have something to teach me or help me find within myself, and that is what I consider outstanding!

Best Regards,

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