Mariann Kukielka Nominee Statement

1. Scholarship Fowler Business Concept Challenge Best Presenter and 2nd Place winner 2012
2. Leadership Undergraduate Representative on President Sullivan’s Strategic Planning Steering Committee
3. Campus Involvement President of Delta Sigma Pi, America’s Foremost Professional Fraternity for Men and Women in Business
4. First-Year Commuter Advisor, Off-Campus Student Services
5. Co-President of Student-Athlete Advisory Committee, Women’s Swimming Representative

As the President of the International Fraternity of Delta Sigma Pi - Nu Tau Chapter and the captain of the University of St. Thomas swim team, Mariann is a true student leader on the St. Paul campus. She is a strong student, swimmer, and leader and she would be a well deserving nominee of the Tommie of the Year award.

- Ashley Barutt, Friend

In my nearly ten years as a part of the University of St. Thomas community, I have had the pleasure to work with and interact with a number of exceptional students. During that time, I have participated in the nominations of ten different seniors for the Tommie Award, two of whom have won. However, no nomination has given me more pride than the one I write today.

I write to nominate Mariann Kukielka for the 2015 Tommie Award. Beyond question she demonstrates the high ideals of both this award, and exemplifies what it means to be a Tommie.

Mariann’s leadership and campus involvement is robust, including serving as the Co-President of the Student Athlete Advisory Committee, President of UST’s chapter of Delta Sigma Pi, an Apartment Coordinator in Morrison Hall, and a First-Year Commuter Advisor. She is an exceptionally dedicated member of the UST Swim Team and this year was selected by her peers to serve as a Captain. Additionally, this past year she was selected as the only undergraduate student on President Sullivan’s Strategic Planning Committee.

When she began at St. Thomas for her first year, Mariann chose to live off campus and commute from home in order to help her family care for her brother, a choice which can certainly make connecting and engaging a challenge. Mariann has overcome that by leaps and bounds. Mariann immediately got involved and connected throughout the campus community, engaging with her commuter advisor, her fellow commuters, and students, faculty and staff throughout the St. Thomas community.
If you have met Mariann, and it seems few have not, you know that this really was not that hard for her given her eagerness to genuinely engage everyone she meets, the exuberance she invests into everything she does, and her ever-present joy.

Somehow, amongst all of this engagement, Mariann also finds time to excel in her academics. She is an Entrepreneurship & Business Communications major, with a Film Studies minor, maintaining an impressive GPA. In 2012 she entered the prestigious Fowler Business Challenge with another student where they achieved second place and best presenters for their startup idea. And, of course, winning the competition was not the end for Mariann; she stayed involved as a mentor for the 2013 competition. This, as well as several other ventures she has pursued, have demonstrated Mariann’s commitment to taking learning beyond the classroom and campus environment, engaging in learning experiences that support and enhance the education St. Thomas provides.

A handful of the items listed above would be enough to deserve consideration for the Tommie Award. The totality of these achievement represent a profound commitment to scholarship, leadership and campus involvement. But what is likely the most striking about Mariann, and a large part of what makes her the ideal Tommie Award recipient, is that she does not see herself this way. Rather, she pursues these lofty ideals with a humility and grace which makes it clear that she does these things simply because to her, this is what a Tommie is.

- Josh Hengemuhle, Supervisor

With extreme determination, intelligence, and a heart of pure gold, Mariann Kukielka exemplifies what it means to be a Tommie. She has an absolutely contagious personality that brightens every room, and a dedication to scholarship that we should all admire. However, perhaps what is most prominent about Mariann is her outlook on life and her utter optimism that radiates to those around her. I first met Mariann in a history course at Century College. I knew absolutely nobody in the course, until I saw a hue of purple pride around the corner. She was wearing a St. Thomas baseball cap. Immediately, she approached me with her ever so friendly presence and grandiose smile and stated, "Hello! I'm Mariann! Are you a Tommie?!?!" After that, we became fast friends.

We all know that Mariann is accomplished. Upon glancing at her resume, you will discover that she is able to balance countless things without sacrificing even a hint of quality. She's a winner of several awards, a volunteer to better our community, and an ideal representative of our campus. But, in my opinion, it is Mariann's personality that truly makes her stand out. She will support her friends through anything. Whenever I am feeling down, I can always count on Mariann to lift my spirits. She is a giver of advice, a producer of laughter, and an incredible friend. She treats everybody with respect and makes it her ultimate goal to
include everyone in a social setting. Her conversing does not consist of petty gossip, but rather compliments of her peers. In simpler terms, she really does have a pure heart.

While we know that Mariann is intelligent, driven, and incredibly kind, we must not forget about her keen sense of humor that is worthy of Comedy Central. Mariann carries a sense of wit that honestly makes me cry of laughter. Her beyond formal vocabulary is perhaps my favorite aspect of her humor. When I tell Mariann that something is going wrong in my life, she will not say, "Oh no. I'm sorry. I hope it gets better soon..." Instead, she states, "My heavens! I cannot even fathom this nuisance in your life! I can only hope that these troubles dissolve into a deep abyss and leave you wandering in nothing but pristine fields of wonder!!" If that's not a good pep-talk, then I certainly do not know what is! Mariann is an individual; that's what makes her stand out. She carries her own sense of personality that is merely impossible to duplicate.

With all of that being said, I cannot think of a better candidate for the Tommie Award. Mariann is an all-star athlete, an involved student, a comedian and a role model. She embodies faith, scholarship and leadership and has an entrepreneurial spirit that will catapult her far in life. I would be honored to have Mariann receive the Tommie award, because, quite honestly, I take pride in being able to become friends with such an accomplished student. If you want an ideal, friendly, selfless recipient of the Tommie Award, vote Mariann Kukielka. Her dedication to St. Thomas deserves this.

- Kayla Bengtson, Friend