



MICHELLE BROWN, DES
NARI MILWAUKEE, INC.

MARY BUSEY HARRIS, CAE, PROFESSIONALISM AWARD

NARI Milwaukee, Inc.'s executive team nominates Michelle Brown, DES, for the 2022 NARI Mary Busey Harris, CAE, Professionalism Award.

Michelle has been a dedicated team member of NARI Milwaukee for eight years. She was hired as the Education and Creative Coordinator in 2013. On the education side she took over coordinating the Remodeler and Supplier Expo. In its third year, the Expo was a one-day education event and business to business exposition for NARI members. She also planned the monthly general membership meetings and any other educational events the Chapter offered. Both responsibilities entailed finding venues, educational speakers and coordinating the event details. She was the staff liaison to the Education and Certification Committee and Program Committee. On the creative side, Michelle facilitated, designed and wrote copy for the monthly newsletter. This was a continuous task with getting articles from committee chairs, updating the events calendar and other content and have it ready for print and mailed before the first of the month to the membership. In addition, NARI Milwaukee had embarked on developing a new website. Michelle was the staff liaison to the project and responsible for gathering, writing, and keeping current content for the new site.

Beyond her assigned roles, Michelle is dedicated to the success of the organization and always willing to help and support her team in any way she can. She's a doer, soundboard, idea generator and beacon of positive energy. She is a pillar of strength during challenging times. In her first two years she dealt with significant staff turnover including transition of two Executive Directors. She always stepped up assuming additional responsibilities assisting the Chapter Presidents' at the time with keeping the organization moving forward. She has spent countless hours embracing, supporting, mentoring and training new staff and Executives about NARI, NARI Milwaukee, its minor events and programs.

When Diane Welhouse was hired as the new Executive Director in 2015, the team had hoped for stabilization. Unfortunately, on day two of Diane's start, the Consumer Show Manager resigned, and transition continued. NARI Milwaukee was 30 days out of executing a new version of the

consumer fall Home & Remodeling Show called the Home & Remodeling Showcase. Within days staff determined the event was far from ready, many details still to be planned, sponsors acquired, sponsor fulfillment executed, marketing pieces developed and printed. Staff rallied together to do whatever it took to execute the event and Michelle rose to the occasion taking the lead. She worked tirelessly to ensure the event went off as intended. Although from a logistical aspect Michelle prevailed and the event was a success. Unfortunately, the event had several challenges with purpose and concept from the onset and lost the organization money.

With the event over it was time for staff to get back to day-to-day business. Diane recognized that Michelle's roll was a bit of a catch all from programs, education, event planning and marketing. She sat down with Michelle and asked her what she really wanted to do. Without hesitation Michelle said she wanted to manage all of NARI's major events. She had been coordinating and organizing events even before NARI with approximately five years' experience. She was ready to for the next level and committed to turn the Showcase into a profitable event and grow and improve all of NARI's events. At that moment Michelle was promoted to Event Manager and was now in charge of the Tour of Remodeled Homes, Remodeler and Supplier Expo, Home & Remodeling show and the largest member only consumer home show in the country NARI Milwaukee Spring Home Improvement Show.

NARI Milwaukee was looking for ways to grow and draw community awareness to the Tour of Remodeled Homes as the event was stagnant. In 2017, NARI Milwaukee partnered with the Aurora Health Care Foundation to specifically support cancer care in the community. Together it was decided to create a fundraising event as a kickoff to the Tour weekend. The vision was a VIP experience in a million-dollar renovated home by a NARI Milwaukee member with fine hors d'oeuvres and beverages, tours of the renovation, entertainment all while guests meet and mingle with local celebrities. The NARI Aurora Cancer Care House Soiree was born, and Michelle was put in charge to make it happen.



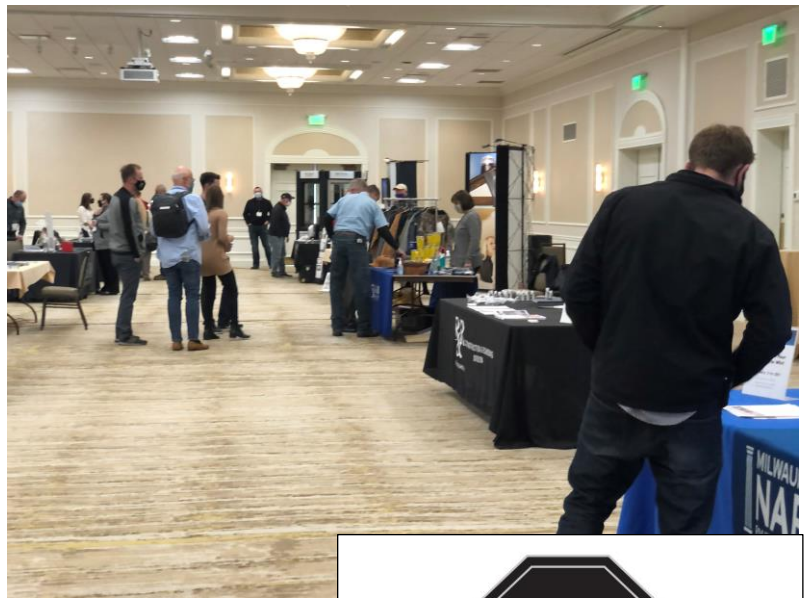
Starting from scratch Michelle had to find a million-dollar renovated home by a NARI Milwaukee member and convince the remodeler and homeowner to host the largest party they ever had for complete strangers all in the name of charitable giving. Michelle demonstrated her leadership and


dedication and acquired a house and turned the vision into reality. She negotiated with local caterers and beverage suppliers to donate the food and beverage so more of the event proceeds would go to cancer research and care. Known as the Soiree, it has become a community favorite charitable event growing in awareness and attendance each year. Over the past three-years Michelle has successfully conducted this event to allow NARI Milwaukee to donate over \$45,000 to Aurora cancer research and care. Unfortunately, due to the pandemic, it was cancelled for 2020 and 2021.



The Remodeler and Supplier Expo was also a target for growth. Michelle took the Remodeler and Supplier Expo event out of the education and certification committee and created its own work team. With dedicated focus, in four years she grew the event from a one-day, chapter focused event with member speakers losing approximately \$5,000 a year to a regional industry educational conference with nationally known speakers and exhibitors netting nearly \$20,000 a year. The 2020 event was planned to take the event to an even higher level – a two-day conference with greater emphasis on leadership and infield technical training. With the pandemic, plans changed. In less than three months to the conference, it was decided to run the event in-person. Michelle moved the event venue as the original venue closed, reverted it back to a one-day event recreating the entire schedule, confirmed all the national speakers were still willing to do a live in-person event and implemented safety protocols in accordance with the CDC, local and

state guidelines. Capacity was limited, temperature checks were taken at the door, no more than two to four attendees per table pending size and mandatory wearing of face coverings. Although a smaller event than normal, Michelle still delivered a high-quality event with education, supplier exposition and networking in a safe environment yielding no event related COVID-19 cases. Seventy three percent of the attendees felt 'very safe' at the event and commented "staff is doing a great job conducting events during the pandemic," "it's my favorite event" and "Great speakers. Great content." Speaker, Shawn VanDyke, personally thanked Michelle and the staff for their leadership hosting in-person educational events and proving it can be done safely.



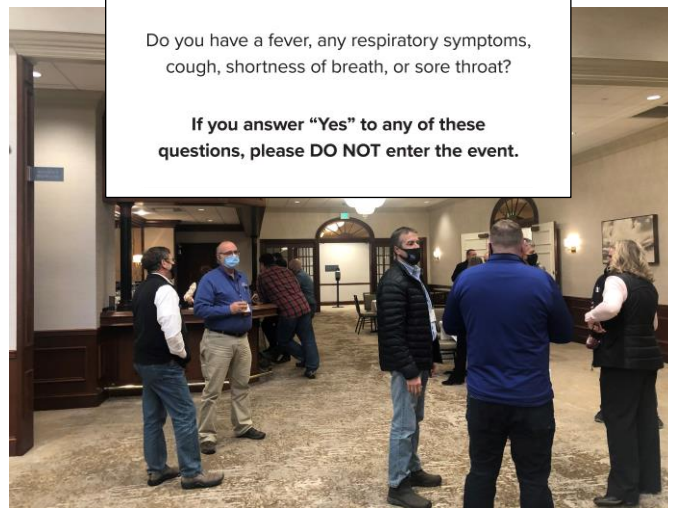


PERSONAL HEALTH CHECK

Have you had close contact with anyone diagnosed with, or shown symptoms for, COVID-19 illness within the last 14 days?

Do you have a fever, any respiratory symptoms, cough, shortness of breath, or sore throat?

If you answer "Yes" to any of these questions, please **DO NOT** enter the event.



In 2021, Michelle started the forward recovery of the Remodeler and Supplier Expo. She was determined to bring the Expo back to pre-pandemic levels. She was able to host back in our original location and acquire top national speakers. Participation approached pre-COVID levels with 165 attendees, including 20 prospects or non-NARI members and 23 exhibitors.



The event even featured a NARI After Dark networking and celebration for NARI Milwaukee's 60th Anniversary of a chartered chapter. All NARI Milwaukee members were invited to the after party, and the event featured a live band. Eighty-five percent of Expo attendees said they were very likely to recommend this event to a friend or colleague. "This was the best expo I've been to!" and "Keep it up..... this event keeps getting better and better!"

Michelle's devotion and dedication were also in bringing the fall Home & Remodeling event back to success. After the major event failure and financial loss in 2015, Michelle was determined to make this not only a profitable, but a positive community event for NARI Milwaukee members and consumers. She completely redesigned the event back to a consumer show with large exhibits, educational stages and attractions. The event was moved back to the WI State Fair Park Exposition Center and moved to the second weekend in October. In 2016, Michelle grew consumer

event attendance four times from 2015 and netted \$69,000 in profit, a 63% increase in revenue for the chapter. Michelle continues to grow this event in member and community engagement.

Poised to hold the 30th annual Home & Remodeling show in October, a new challenge hit – a national pandemic. NARI Milwaukee as an organization has been in the consumer home show business for nearly 60 years. Michelle has grown to an expert in the business. Where consumer events have been struggling, she has successfully steadied and turned our events to increase attendance and revenue over the past five years. However, conducting a health-safe show during a pandemic was different. The NARI Milwaukee Spring Home Improvement Show was the last major consumer event held in Wisconsin due to the state shut down and ‘Safer at Home’ order issued by the Governor in March 2020. NARI Milwaukee watched as businesses and other associations in our area came to a standstill, immediately cancelled all in-person events for 2020 and panicked over their future. The economy and people’s lively hoods were crumbling as business collapsed.

Working remotely due to the ‘Safer at Home’ order, the staff was meeting daily via video conference. As the chapter in-person events started cancelling, in true leadership Michelle said let’s run the October show, staff can do this, and we were ready for the challenge. Her positive outlook inspired the team that we would not let our small business membership down and support them with the programs and services they value. Further, remodeling demand escalated. Consumers were desperately seeking remodeling professionals to make accommodations to their homes as their standard place of rest suddenly became the office, classroom, restaurant, playhouse and staycation destination. In face of complete unknown, Michelle’s confidence that we could overcome whatever came the team’s way and run a safe show was unwavering. Although we knew this was probably not going to be our biggest event, she gained support from the consumer show work team, membership and then the board of directors to move forward.

NARI Milwaukee fully understood the pandemic was serious and the last thing we wanted to do was endanger any of our members, staff and the community. Michelle knew to do this we would need a full commitment from the Wisconsin State Fair Park, location of the show, and Valley Exposition Services – and they agreed. The October NARI Milwaukee Home & Remodeling Show was going to be the first major public event to occur in the state since our last consumer show in February.

Together with our partners, our insurance and legal teams NARI Milwaukee created a COVID-19 Health and Safety policy. Michelle also mandated that each exhibitor in the show create their own health and safety plan for their space and employees working the event. All exhibitors were informed up front of the guidelines and that anyone in attendance would be required to wear a face covering or be removed from the event. Michelle also enabled contact tracing measures if cases of COVID-19 were linked to the event staff could notify anyone in attendance. Michelle also watched closely the Phased Reopening Guidance for Suburban Milwaukee County and WI State Orders. Rules were changing almost weekly and Michelle had to monitor any capacity limits of the venue at State Fair Park as determined by the West Allis Fire Department so consumer traffic could be controlled, as necessary.

The October show is traditionally held in the Exposition Center at the fairgrounds but on April 9 the Governor announced the construction of an Alternative Care Facility (ACF) in the venue. At the time COVID-19 cases in the state were low and it was expected the ACF would be removed by July. In August, Michelle learned the ACF was not coming down and the Governor extended the contract to the end of the year. The event had to move venues, and nothing was open that could accommodate the size of the show. Michelle opted for a smaller building on the fairgrounds, re-worked the entire floor plan, called registered exhibitors to inform them of the changes and relaunched registration to the membership.

Michelle continued to navigate and adjust planning to the continuous rule changes as cases of the virus started to rise in the northern area of the state. With the show ready to open October 16, Michelle was informed on October 7 that the Governor ordered to open the ACF on October 14. It became a major decision to proceed or not with the ACF opening on the same grounds. What would the optics be, how would our members and community react? After much deliberation and conversation with members, Michelle remained steadfast that members deserved the show, and she could make it happen safely and positively in the community. Her unwavering dedication significantly influenced the decision that the show would go on.

NARI Milwaukee was embraced by members, association peers, consumers and media as the event doors opened. As anticipated, attendance was down, but visibility and awareness in the community up. NARI Milwaukee had done it due to the leadership and dedication of Michelle. She successfully conducted an in-person consumer show with over 2,000 people and no cases of COVID-19 linked to anyone in attendance.



Michelle put NARI Milwaukee on the map not just locally but nationally as leaders in the event and meeting space. Event planners nationally called and those local and from nearby states attended the show to commend NARI Milwaukee and Michelle on their leadership and benchmark the event for their future use.



Further NARI Milwaukee and the Home & Remodeling Show became a top media story that week. All four of the markets' major news stations visited the show and most returned two and three times over the three days. They interviewed exhibitors, show guests and staff. Stories aired during the news casts and were posted online. Links to some of the stories are included.

[Fox 6 news story](#)

[Channel 12 news story](#)

[Channel 58 news story](#)

[Channel 4 news story](#)

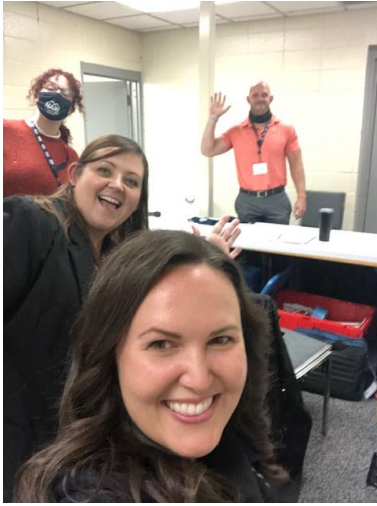
[Channel 4 Morning Blend story](#)

NARI Milwaukee also garnered attention from national media – ProRemodeler magazine. They did two interviews one for a [written story](#) and follow-up live interview on their video news outlet [The Weekly](#).

Although Michelle has been successful in keeping in-person events going for NARI Milwaukee during this challenging year, she also realizes events are changing. Michelle is always networking, reading, attending seminars and webinars to improve her skills and stay on top of the event and meetings business. This year was no different. She recognized NARI Milwaukee in some capacities had to and will continue to run digital and hybrid events. To be equipped to lead the design, delivery and monetization of effective and highly interactive virtual events, Michelle obtained her Digital Event Strategist Certification through the Professional Convention Management Association.

Every day Michelle is a resource to members and consumers for NARI Milwaukee. She deals with a vast amount of people in a variety of situations. Regardless the situation, Michelle's professionalism and dedication to NARI Milwaukee is unwavering. She handles tough situations and conflict fairly, calmly and empathetically all while holding up the standards of the organization. Her high moral and ethical standards set her apart in maintaining not only her integrity with members and consumers, but that of NARI Milwaukee. She is a rock and voice of reason in the office as well as the free spirit of fun. She has a friendly outgoing demeanor with an infectious laugh that enhances the office atmosphere daily. Her relationships with staff and members have blossomed into valuable friendships.

For her service to NARI Milwaukee, Michelle has received three President's Awards in recognition of her dedication and support of the President during his/her term.



Outside of work Michelle is a dedicated wife and mother to her son. She loves the outdoors and nature. She is genuinely caring and compassionate to her community and all people. She supports the United Way of Greater Milwaukee, United Performing Arts Fund, American Heart Association and has volunteered for Habitat for Humanity, Big Brothers Big Sisters, Next Door Foundation and Urban Ecology Center.

Michelle also likes to share her knowledge and talent by having event and meeting planning students shadow her at NARI Milwaukee events to learn real world experience on setting up and preparing successful events. This year she hired and mentored her first intern to teach the start to finish aspect and all the planning and details that go on behind the scenes to execute successful events.

Michelle has been, and will continue to be, a valued and highly respected professional team member of NARI Milwaukee. Her commitment, drive and passion for success of the chapter and to the membership is infectious and why she is respected among all NARI members, her team and venues and suppliers she works with. Michelle would be an extremely worthy recipient of the NARI Mary Busey Harris, CAE, Professionalism Award.

We ask that you consider honoring Michelle Brown, DES for the 2022 NARI Mary Busey Harris, CAE, Professionalism Award.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

The NARI Milwaukee Executive Team



December 12, 2021

To Whom it May Concern:

Professionalism isn't defined by those who get center stage by means of title or office elected to. Those engaged in speaking to the members, community or doing media interviews. Professionalism involves being reliable, setting your own high standards, and showing that you care about every aspect of your job. Those doing the heavy lifting behind the scenes need to be recognized for their efforts.

In over 25 years of leadership, I can tell you there is no more desiring person of the Mary Busey Harris CAE, Professionalism Award than Michelle Brown, DES, Event Manager at NARI Milwaukee. She beyond exemplifies care and passion of her job and the NARI association. For eight years she has been tenacious about making our chapter successful not only in the events we conduct but all we do.

Michelle is diligent, organized and energetic. She has a 'do what it takes' mentality to exceed the goals and expectations. She celebrates our wins and is devastated by any setback. She takes her position seriously, laughs infectiously and is emotionally vested. Michelle manages over \$1,125,000 in revenue and \$476,000 in net profit for our chapter. She has my full trust, and I don't micromanage; worry or think twice she doesn't have it under control. She is self-accountable for her work, thoughts, words and actions. If I need to be concerned, I have no doubt that Michelle will be in my office to tell me.

I joke in the office that my role as Executive Director is window dressing. It's no joke when it comes to our major events. Michelle is in charge and the buck stops with her. Onsite at events she tells me what to do and when to do it and I won't have it any other way. Yes, I am socializing with the members and attendees, doing presentations and all the media interviews. That is window dressing. Michelle makes our events happen.

Employees like Michelle are hard to come by. I am blessed and fortunate to have Michelle on my team and I would put her on my team again and again. Unfortunately, more than not these folks don't get the recognition they deserve.

No, this letter isn't coming from the stated required member. It is coming from her boss and friend who can attest better for her than anyone. Please accept my utmost support and recommendation of Michelle Brown, DES, for Mary Busey Harris CAE, Professionalism Award.

Sincerely,

Diane Welhouse, CKBR
Executive Director, NARI Milwaukee



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To whom it may concern,

I have had the pleasure of working with Michelle Brown in many different aspects of the NARI organization. Michelle is instrumental in facilitating all our home show success. She is prompt with her responsiveness to any questions about the show dates, booth location and organizational details. She communicates clearly and effectively prior to and post any show with details that we may need.


She has always been professional with our company and others when looking to members of the NARI organization to schedule appearances, such as for the radio shows, and balancing guests and NARI representation. Ensuring that J&J has had opportunities to represent both aspects.

In 2017, we worked closely with Michelle to facilitate and represent the first Vince Lombardi cancer house fundraisers for NARI. She was amazing to work with, her professionalism was in full display pulling together sponsors, catering, staffing, community awareness and complete correlation and planning with our internal staff. Working with her was a great pleasure, so much so that we volunteered to sponsor a second Cancer House fundraiser a few years later.

Michelle is devoted and dependable in her role with NARI, it is not uncommon to get communication and follow up to questions long after "normal" business hours have passed. Michelle is reliable, if she for some odd reason does not know the answer to what you are looking for, she connects you to the right person or reaches out herself. She never misses the key detail of communicating back where she is in the process or who will be helping you. To put it simply, if she says she will do something she does. Without need to follow up or remind.

Michelle is a wonderful person and one of the best representations of NARI. I look forward to any opportunity that I have to work with on projects.

Sincerely,



Jason Cyborowski



12-22-2020

To Whom it may Concern-

I would like to recommend Michelle Brown for the Mary Busey Harris, CAE, Professionalism Award.

Michelle brings a high level of professionalism to the Remodeling Industry - specifically within the NARI Milwaukee Chapter. Michelle has been instrumental in heading up our consumer shows - and this year has been no different. While others decided to postpone or even cancel events due to COVID - Michelle worked tirelessly with our Board and members to put together a safely run consumer show this past Fall.

As chapter President this past year, I have gotten to see first hand the passion she has for her craft. She continues to put the association in the most positive light. We are very fortunate to have her. I am confident that Michelle will continue to represent both NARI Milwaukee and the Remodeling Industry in a positive way for years to come.

I strongly recommend Michelle for this award. Please feel free to reach out with any questions that you may have.

Tom Mainville

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Josh Brown
Bliffert Lumber
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12/21/20



RE: Mary Busey Harris, CAE, Professionalism Award

To whom it may concern:

It is my pleasure to support the nomination of Michelle Brown for the Mary Busey Harris, CAE, Professionalism Award. I have worked closely with Michelle since she began her career with NARI Milwaukee in 2013. As a former committee chair, board member, and past president of both the chapter and the charitable foundation I have been able to collaborate with Michelle in a variety of different roles.

Although Michelle's title is Event Manager, she is so much more than that to the organization. Her devotion and dedication to all things NARI is there for all to see. The countless late-night emails I have received with idea after idea on how to promote the chapter bear witness to that fact. Michelle's outstanding leadership skills shine in every committee meeting she attends. Her ability to guide the volunteer groups to reach successful outcomes is second to none. Year after year she puts on our enormous, revenue generating consumer shows, that continue to be the best in our industry. Every successful event that we put on raises the profile of NARI Milwaukee and its members. These events continue to thrive because of the standards of professionalism and exceptional leadership that Michelle provides and demands of those she works with.

When I heard Michelle was being nominated for the award, I immediately volunteered to write this recommendation. In addition to everything I mentioned previously I believe Michelle has made me a better leader. I am extremely grateful for her contributions to NARI Milwaukee and the remodeling industry.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "JB" with a stylized flourish.

Josh Brown
Vice President-Sales