

# Michelle Quisenberry

Managing Partner • Volterra LLC



Michelle Quisenberry currently has three day-time gigs, and she's moonlighting as a documentary filmmaker as well.

First, she's managing partner of Volterra — the company that operates the Volterra restaurants in Ballard and Kirkland, private event venue Volterra Drawing Room and a branded products line that includes seasoning salts.

In addition, publicly traded biotech Oncothreon has hired her as its "outsourced" director of compliance with the Sarbanes-Oxley accounting reform law. She also sits on the advisory board of Jet City Stream, a digital entertainment company that is focused on local

music and entertainment.

"I have several jobs and I love them all," she said.

They may seem like a strange combination, but all along her career path Quisenberry has found ways to integrate her many interests — from accounting and business management, to the arts, to entrepreneurialism. She said there was never a pivot point from one to the next, rather a continuous evolution.

She said opening Volterra is what she's most proud of. There she oversees the marketing, public relations, special events and operations of all of the venues, which were named after the Tuscan hilltop town where she and her co-owner and husband, Chef Don Curtiss, were married. Volterra employs 75 people.

**AGE:** 44

**HOMETOWN:** Burien

**RAISED:** Port Orchard

**BUSINESS BACKGROUND:** Corporate accountant, Airborne Freight Corp.; controller, HMG; controller, Online Interactive; director of finance, Experience Music Project (EMP); director of finance, Esurg Corp.; consultant, Washington Mutual Bank; project manager, Slalom Consulting; director of Sarbanes Oxley compliance, Oncothreon Inc.; managing partner, Volterra LLC

**CIVIC INVOLVEMENT:** I have been actively involved with the Seattle International Film Festival (SIFF) since 2005 and serve as president of the board of directors and chair the development committee. Although my schedule only allows me to sit on one board, I support numerous local nonprofit organizations, as I feel it's important to generously give both time and resources back to the community.

**CAREER TURNING POINT:** There hasn't been one turning point in my career. It's continuously evolved.

**BIGGEST CAREER CHALLENGE:** I've had several big challenges in my career. Being a part of the startup of Online Interactive in 1995, serving as the director of finance of Experience Music Project (EMP) from groundbreaking through opening, running an international Sarbanes-Oxley compliance project across seven countries, and opening our flagship location of Volterra and building our brand.

**PROUDEST CAREER MOMENT:** Opening Volterra with my husband, Don

**BIGGEST ACCOMPLISHMENT IN 2012:** Opening our second restaurant, Volterra Kirkland. We built out the space from a cold shell and I didn't realize how big a project it would be, but I'm very proud of the result. It was truly a team effort.

**NEXT BIG GOALS:** I'm currently co-producing a documentary, "The Glamour and the Squalor," about the rise, fall and revival of Rock 'n Roll Hall of Fame radio personality Marco Colins and how he shaped the '90s music scene. Marco is one of my best friends, and I'm honored to be involved in this film and share his story. In the future, I would love to continue working on film- and music-related projects.

**OTHER JOB YOU WOULD WANT:** Music management or something film related

**MENTORS:** I've been fortunate to have many inspirational people in my life. However, my dad has probably been my single biggest influence. He has the strongest work ethic of anyone I've known. He stressed the importance of being a strong, independent woman from the time I was very small, encouraged me to voice my opinion, and confidently believed that if I put my mind to something, I would be successful.

**NETWORKING TIPS:** I view networking as a way that I can help others. Even though my schedule is crazy, I always make time for coffee dates and try to follow up with a note.

**BEST WORDS OF ADVICE RECEIVED:** One of my mentors and former boss, Chuck Gottschalk, told me many years ago "Always trust your instincts and don't be afraid to take risks. The bigger the risk, the bigger the reward."

## The real reward is not what we give to Cheryl Scott, but what Cheryl gives to us.

Being among the deserving recipients of the Women of Influence Award is certainly a great honor for our past CEO, Cheryl Scott. All of us at Group Health congratulate Cheryl on this very special recognition.

But it is we, all of us, who are rewarded by Cheryl's enduring passion and lifelong dedication to better health for people in our community and the world over. Her humanity, empathy, and contagious inspiration are something we feel privileged to have experienced. We know that she continues to similarly touch others as a leader, mentor, and friend.

Group Health is proud to congratulate Cheryl Scott and all the honorees of the Women of Influence Award.

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