

DAVIS

JEFF



Word that best describes you:
AMBITIOUS

COO
Davis Property & Investments

Still a Cougar through and through, Jeff says he owes much to Washington State University. He was a walk-on for the football team, but it was his double-major in business and human relations that helped him embark on his life's journey. "I was fortunate to get a great education there," he said.



Jeff Davis was fresh out of Washington State University, looking for a job in commercial real estate when his father, Bill Davis, made him an offer.

"His vision was to buy a couple of buildings, I would manage them and collect rents and he would play a lot of golf," Davis jokes.

Just 23, Davis in 1998 became chief operating officer of the newly created Davis Property & Investments. Both Davis and his dad — who had recently sold his commercial plumbing supply business, Pacific Water Works — saw opportunity for industrial development in the South Puget Sound area. They believed rising land prices in the Kent Valley would push manufacturing and distribution farther south into South King and Pierce counties.

Building a new firm from scratch was a big step for a young college graduate.

"(My dad) put an incredible amount of trust and faith in me," Davis said. "I do not know that I would have that much faith in myself starting something that young."

But Davis showed an aptitude for real estate development. Kent-based Davis Property & Investment was one of the fastest growing companies in the state for each of its first five years. Davis credits much of the firm's success to his father's contacts in the construction industry and brokerage community, who provided him advice and support.

Over the past decade, Davis has built DPI into a real estate development and management firm with a \$130 million portfolio and eight employees. During that time, DPI has shifted away from building large-scale warehouse-distribution centers to focusing on smaller, more flexible office-warehouse buildings that attract a wider range of tenants.

Last year, a DPI project in Lacey was a finalist for the Industrial Development of the Year award from the state chapter of the National Association of Industrial and Office Properties.

Davis, now 33, said his goal is to grow DPI into a family business that will last several more generations.

In his spare time, Davis serves on the board of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Puget Sound and with other nonprofit organizations.

HOMETOWN: Bellevue

FAMILY STATUS: Married

BOOK ON YOUR NIGHTSTAND:

"George Washington on Leadership," by Richard Brookhiser

FAVORITE MOVIE: Indiana Jones

STRESS RELIEVER: Spending time with my wife and children

MOST EMBARRASSING CD YOU OWN:

I recently had an 'N Sync song pop up on my iPod while with my buddies. It was my wife's CD. I swear ...

PROFESSION OTHER THAN YOUR OWN YOU'D LIKE TO TRY:

Commercial real estate brokerage

YOUR COMPANY'S ROCK BAND NAME:

The Triple Nets

GUILTY PLEASURE: Football season and March Madness on TV

SUPERPOWER WANTED: If only I could fly, I would be so much more efficient.

PASSIONATE CAUSE: I am passionate about organizations that help children. Specifically Big Brothers and Big Sisters of Puget Sound, Sacred Heart Shelter, King County Sexual Assault and Resource Center, and Childhaven.

LEINONEN GALLAGHER

ALISSA

Word that best describes you:
CREATIVE



OWNER AND CEO
Gourmondo Catering Co.

Alissa started riding horses around age 8. Her grandmother was a rider, and now Alissa rides with her children to relax and connect with them. These are the first pairs of boots for her daughter, son and herself.

Though she's the founder and co-owner of a catering and box-lunch business, Alissa Leinonen Gallagher is the first to admit she's no workaholic.

While obtaining her bachelor of arts degree in business administration and marketing from the University of Washington, Gallagher spent time studying in Sienna, Italy. It was an experience that not only deepened her appreciation of fine cuisine but also led her to a life philosophy: One should work to live, not live to work.

Upon returning to the U.S. and earning her degree, Gallagher became a manager and then partner at the Madison Park Italian restaurant, Sostanza Trattoria. Within two years, however, at the age of 25, Gallagher decided to start her own business.

She asked Ron Johnson, then a sous chef at Sostanza, and Jennifer Clancy, a former classmate, to join her in opening Gourmondo. The three partners had a total capital — part of which was obtained by cashing out IRA and refinancing Gallagher's Jeep. And the catering company opened near Pike Place Market in a 1,000-square-foot storefront that was "between a t and a cobbler."

After an inauspicious opening day — \$36,000 in sales over the first few slow months followed, and Gallagher wondered if she had jumped on the dot-com bandwagon with many others. "I was nervous about trying to make a living out of her passion for food."

The business eventually grew, however, after a former Starbucks employee, David Schultz, stopped in for lunch and took a starbucks to go. Two days later the phone started ringing. Gourmondo's 100 workers, took in \$2.5 million in revenues last year. The company now serves 700 and 1,200 box lunches a day. It's eliminated its drive-thru to expand its box-lunch options and moved operations to a new location in South Park to keep expanding the box-lunch business.

Gallagher, 38, says she is now living the life she always wanted. She's working part-time, dining out often with her husband and riding horses on the weekends with her daughter and son — and those of the other Gourmondo's employees. "I love it here at Gourmondo."

Said Gallagher, "It's not uncommon to see a kitchen having a sword fight with baguettes."