



A CELEBRATION OF LOCAL FOOD, WINE & BEER
September 30 - October 2

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AWARD WINNER PHOTOS: <http://ow.ly/cd0Z303yGxx>

Harvest Fair Names Sonoma-Cutrer Vineyards' Shannon Donnell 2016 Outstanding Young Person in Agribusiness

Viticulturist brings science, passion, and prosperity to vineyards

SANTA ROSA, CA – August 17, 2016 – Born and raised in Sonoma County, Shannon Donnell is a wife, mother, scientist, MBA, viticulturist, vintner, and women's advocate. Currently the Grower Relations and Vineyard Operations Manager for Sonoma-Cutrer Vineyards, Donnell oversees the internal management of over 1,100 acres of Chardonnay and Pinot Noir across six vineyards. It is through her dedication, discovery of genetic research, commitment to family and community, and contribution to the future preservation of grape growing that Donnell has earned the respect and admiration of her peers. This year, the Sonoma County Harvest Fair is proud to recognize Shannon Donnell as 2016 Outstanding Young Person in Agribusiness.

Originally pursuing a degree in Genetics at UC Davis, Shannon was vaguely aware of the growing wine industry back home. It wasn't until her final year in her undergraduate program that she discovered the deeply rooted connection between science, viticulture, and winemaking. After signing up for an introduction to winemaking class, Shannon landed a job working with professor and geneticist of the UC Davis Viticulture and Enology department, Dr. Andrew Walker. It was there that she began researching the resistance of grapevines to Pierce's Disease and working on various grapevine genetic research projects.

Thirsty for knowledge, Shannon wanted to learn more about winemaking. She made the short track to Napa and spent a harvest season working for Cakebread Cellars. From there she spent the next few years working as a Pest Control Advisor for both Napa and Sonoma Counties and later moved on as Viticulturist for Duckhorn Winery in St. Helena. Shannon had already begun to ensure that the growers she worked with achieved the highest possible grape quality.



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In 2013, happily married and with a third child on the way, Shannon was one of the first to complete the newly developed Executive MBA program in Wine Business at Sonoma State University. Shannon shares that she is most proud of obtaining her MBA while raising her family and starting her own wine label with her husband in just 18 months. This is only a small window into the many successes she has realized during her lifetime. From 2012 – 2014 Donnell was a board member for the Russian River Valley Winegrowers, Past Co-Chair of GROW at Sonoma-Cutrer (an internal employee resource group that is focused on the development and growth of women in the workplace), and member of the Sonoma State University Mentor Program.

Guided by her parent's values of hard work and continual improvement, Shannon remains humble and grounded despite her success. When notified of this award nomination, a shocked and almost speechless Shannon replied, "I am absolutely honored and so incredibly humbled for this recognition and to be among the others that have received this award."

The Sonoma County Harvest Fair will honor Shannon Donnell with the 2016 award for Outstanding Young Person in Agribusiness during a ceremony and dinner to be held September 25 at Luther Burbank Center for the Arts. The celebration is open to the public with a limited number of tickets available at HarvestFair.org or at the Harvest Fair Box Office located at 1350 Bennett Valley Road in Santa Rosa.

The 2016 Sonoma County Harvest Fair is September 30 – October 2 at the Sonoma County Event Center at the Fairgrounds. Visit HarvestFair.org or call (707) 545-4200 or find "Sonoma County Harvest Fair" on Facebook.

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