

Chad Doerge, new president and deputy CEO of Round Hill, is a dealmaker to watch

After 30 years in finance, Chad Doerge pivots to music dealmaking at Round Hill, which owns rights to songs performed by George Harrison, Elvis Presley, Black Sabbath and Madonna.

Iris Dorbian

Chad Doerge has enjoyed a 30-year career spanning nearly every facet of the finance world. From founding member of Deutsche Bank's global capital sales group to president and chief revenue officer of Aiera, the Long Island native and resident recently became the [president and deputy CEO of Round Hill Music](#), a New York-based private equity firm that owns and manages a \$1.1 billion portfolio of over 200,000 music copyrights, including songs performed by George Harrison, Elvis Presley, Black Sabbath and Madonna.

Doerge's new role will draw upon an arsenal of skills including AI strategy, organizational leadership and business development, as well as a bit of guitar playing.



Chad Doerge, Round Hill

“I really get to lean on this team that has been investing in music IP longer than anyone,” he said. “My job isn’t to reinvent anything about that. It’s to

take what I've learned in my career – negotiating and dealmaking at Aiera, understanding how large allocators think and make decisions, and apply that to what this team does very well. It's a complementary fit.”

The son of a long-time investment banker who spent most of his career at the fabled Wall Street brokerage house Smith Barney (now known as Morgan Stanley Wealth Management), Doerge followed in his father's footsteps by spending his college breaks, toiling away at a variety of finance jobs. A highlight was working the floor of the New York Stock Exchange when he was a clerk and runner for specialist firm Benjamin Jacobson and Sons, handling a rapid input of orders. (The firm was later acquired by Goldman Sachs for \$250 million in 2001.)

Graduating from Hobart and William Smith Colleges in 1996 with a bachelor's degree in economics, Doerge was ready to begin his climb up the finance ladder. He landed a job at CE Unterberg Towbin, a now long-defunct Manhattan investment bank, where Doerge eventually rose to vice-president of institutional sales. From there, he moved on to leadership roles at Fulcrum Global Partners, Deutsche Bank, Evercore ISI and Aiera, cutting a swath across the New York City financial landscape.

Doerge is especially proud of co-founding Aiera, which he helped launch in 2018 and where he remains an investor and adviser. Helming a start-up and securing VC funding are not easy tasks, but Doerge and his colleagues were able to make it work.

“It's amazing how few start-ups make it to \$1 million in recurring revenues,” said Doerge. “It takes a while to find product market fit, making unstructured data more readable for the human research person.”

Round Hill will usher in yet another major milestone in Doerge's professional trajectory.

Doerge has known Round Hill CEO and founder Josh Gruss for 30 years. Even though they did not grow up together, they met through mutual friends and bonded over their ardent love of music.

Nine months ago, Doerge had a conversation with Gruss that would prove to be a life-changer.

“[Josh] asked me about Aiera – what was happening,” recalled Doerge. “And then he described some of his needs on the Round Hill side, which include a lot of places where I have a skills set – like significantly advancing centralized data capture. There are newly available AI efficiencies that had not been employed yet at Round Hill. That was a priority for Josh [as well as] obviously to grow the Round Hill asset base.”

It was a compelling opportunity that Doerge could not pass up. A big reason was Doerge’s passion for music, a family connection aided and abetted by his uncle Craig Doerge, a professional musician who has worked with the stellar likes of Jackson Browne, James Taylor and Crosby, Stills and Nash.

“I feel strongly that music is a core basic human need,” maintained Doerge. “There’s food, water, clothing, shelter. What’s next? Music is the next on the list. It’s the oldest art form known to man. It is woven into every culture across history, survival and storytelling. When you think about it as an asset class, it’s beautifully non-correlated at a time when the world is unpredictable. In good times and bad times, this creates a steady income producing asset that performs in all sorts of markets.”

Asked to single out his most noteworthy project, Doerge cited Penny’s Flight Foundation, a charity organization he and his wife Kate Doerge launched in 2022 following the death of their teenage daughter from neurofibromatosis. The foundation’s mission is to raise awareness and money to fund research to fight the disease.

“Grief is very different,” he said, explaining the genesis of the foundation. “How do you celebrate a legacy of the person and everything they stood for?”

An annual music festival featuring acts such as Wyclef Jean has helped raise \$4 million for the foundation. His wife Kate’s book, *Reimagining Grief: A New Path to Finding Healing, Strength, and Joy After Loss*, in which she

discusses losing both her parents and daughter to neurofibromatosis, is set for publication this June.

The experience with the foundation, combined with his career, illuminates a personal philosophy that Doerge lives by, one that informs both his personal and professional life.

“Do unto others as you would have them do to you,” said Doerge. “It’s a simple way to operate and I think every decision can be boiled down to following the golden rule. I think whether that’s a business or personal decision, that’s the philosophy that guides me and my family as well.”