

A Family Legacy of Service



Lance Cleghorn, director of cyber resilience with the Maryland Department of Information Technology, poses for a photo before the DoIT sign.

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Article and Photos by Chazz Kibler

CROWNSVILLE, Md. – There are a variety of factors that can influence one's career decision-making status. According to [existing research](#), social support and career self-efficacy can significantly affect this process. These studies suggest that family input can play a crucial role in adolescents' career decisions. For Lance Cleghorn, director of cyber resilience with the Maryland Department of Information Technology, his passion for service and computers began at a young age.

“So when I was really little, my grandfather was in the Marine Corps, and he was really into computer technology, like when it was first coming about and being a thing,”

said Cleghorn. “And I can remember being a little kid and sitting on Grandfather's lap and figuring out how to boot into DOS (Disk Operating System) to play Lemmings, which is this really old computer game that first got me interested in computers.”

While attending East Carolina University, Cleghorn joined a federal scholarship program.

“When I was in school getting my degree, I was focused on Cisco Networking,” said Cleghorn. “And now they had a scholarship program where they were like, ‘We'll pay for your school, but in return, you have to repay that with the federal government.’”

Cleghorn said the caveat to benefitting from the scholarship program meant he was obligated to work for the federal government in a cybersecurity role for a few years.

“That started the interest, and then I stuck with it ever since,” said Cleghorn. “I've had different operational and security roles, but I really found a passion for security.”

Cleghorn's passion for cybersecurity netted him a ten-year career at the Department of Defense before transitioning to DoIT.

“I wanted to stick to government service,” said Cleghorn. “And so, Katie Savage, who's the secretary here, was my director at the Defense Digital Service, and we had kept in touch. DoIT seemed like a great place to join because it is in this great organizational growth period, and it's a great place to make an actual difference, which I think is something I've been passionate about my whole career.”



Making a difference through service is somewhat of a family business.

“My family is big into service,” said Cleghorn. “Most of my uncles and family members were in the Marines or the Army. And then a lot of my family also did federal service,

so when I looked at taking on government career service, it seemed like state service would also be interesting to try out and see how it is different.”

When Cleghorn is not serving Maryland as the director of cyber resilience, you can find him inside a virtual classroom as an adjunct professor for the University of Maryland Global Campus, where he says 50 to 60% of classes consist of service members and their families.

“I have been teaching for six years, and it’s been extremely rewarding from start to finish,” said Cleghorn. “Being able to make an impact on folks that have served not only their country but also people who want to get into the same career field and make a difference is a rewarding experience.”

Regarding Cleghorn’s teachings, he likes to add a touch of reality to his lessons by encouraging a diversity of thought.

“I found throughout my career that there often is more than one right answer,” said Cleghorn. “People come from different backgrounds, ethnicities, and genders, but where they learn and how they learn is different. And I think that diversity of thought lends itself to solving cyber problems exceptionally well.”

While at DoIT, Cleghorn says he hopes to bring some of what he did at DoD and emulate it at the state level.

“I would like to spend 3 to 5 years here and really make a significant difference,” said Cleghorn. “I’m most passionate about adversary emulation, penetration testing, and red teaming things. So I am really excited and interested in how we can grow and improve.”

