



Graduate Success Story

Blaze Llanos

2014, Bachelor of Science, Information Technology

Veteran Blaze Llanos considers his heritage of Hawaiian, Italian, and Puerto Rican descent “a pretty cool mix.” In addition to his colorful heritage, he brought considerable and varied life experience to Brown Mackie College—Miami. By the time he enrolled in a bachelor degree program at the Miami school, he had already earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Criminal Justice from the University of Buffalo in New York, and served for 10 years in the U.S. Marines.

Joining the Marine Corps is a family tradition for Blaze, who served from 1997 to 2007. “Every family member has participated in the Marines since the revolutionary war,” he says with pride. “I am the 110th member of my family to serve. My brother is 111th, and a cousin serving now makes 112.”

During his 10-year stint in the Marines, he was stationed in Hawaii, Washington D.C., and Korea and also deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan. Blaze’s military experience includes work as communications specialist and martial arts instructor. The martial arts track led him to serve as bodyguard for then Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld during one overseas deployment.

Secretary Rumsfeld requested Blaze’s continued service as bodyguard upon his return to the U.S. “After a few weeks I was transferred to do security for Vice President Cheney. From there, I moved on to doing security for President Bush,” says Blaze. “In this capacity, I worked in the military ring of a three-tier security circle. I was kind of a hybrid with both communications and the bodyguard experience, so I knew what to look for, and could work the communications equipment if anything came about.”

Upon his return to civilian life, Blaze sought relief from the cold northern winters. He settled in Miami, Florida and secured employment with the

Miami Herald. When Brown Mackie College—Miami moved into the same building, he took full advantage of his unexpected good luck. “Knocking out one class at a time and moving on to the next seemed to be a better build than taking three classes congruently that had nothing to do with each other,” he says. “Plus, I was never going to be late for class.”

Blaze earned a Bachelor’s degree in Information Technology at Brown Mackie College—Miami in 2014. He joined the staff at Commonwealth-Altadis, Inc., a Division of Imperial Tobacco Group in Fort Lauderdale, Florida as an information technology specialist. “I was working at the help desk for a sales force of approximately a thousand sales members throughout the U.S.,” says Blaze. The job entailed fixing regular day-to-day computer problems, and issuing and troubleshooting email, cell phones and iPads.”

Within a year, Blaze was promoted to supervisor of IT service delivery. He oversees a staff of 12, handling IT service for the massive sales force and the headquarters administrative group. “We’re always fixing something,” he says. “There’s always an issue that forces us to think outside the box. Every day it’s something different. I think that’s the best part about the job.”

The courses at Brown Mackie College—Miami gave Blaze the knowledge and skills necessary to do his job. “The curriculum has helped my career tremendously,” he says. “I got promoted quickly by applying everything I learned to my job.” He remembers wondering if the crazy schedule of working full-time and going to school was worth it. “You take homework home at night. You have to deal with the family, the dogs, the bills. There’s no time for TV and barely time to eat. Then you get to the point at graduation. Yes, it was worth it!”

 BROWN MACKIE COLLEGE[®] MIAMI

3700 Lakeside Drive, Suite 100; Miramar, FL 33027

ONE COURSE A MONTH[®]

See ge.brownmackie.edu/programoffering/2757 for program duration, tuition, fees, and other costs, median debt, federal salary data, alumni success, and other important info.

Accredited Member, ACICS. Brown Mackie College—Miami is licensed by the Commission for Independent Education, Florida Department of Education. Brown Mackie College—Miami is one of over 25 school locations of the Brown Mackie College system of schools. Programs, credential levels, technology, and scheduling options are subject to change. 3700 Lakeside Drive; Miramar, FL 33027. ©2014 Brown Mackie College.

Our email address is csprogramadmin@edmc.edu. See bmcprograms.info for program duration, tuition, fees and other costs, median debt, federal salary data, alumni success, and other important info. 1447 01/15