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Mentor Profile: Lanard Ingram

I met Lanard Ingram on April 24th, 2025, at the Public Relations Society Association Mentorship Mixer. At this event, I talked to many mentors about resume advice, recent public relations news, and summer internship opportunities. All the professionals I met provided valuable advice, but it was Lanard who gave me the opportunity to intern at the Detroit Economic Growth Company (DEGC). Lanard's work involves many things, such as back-to-back meetings, writing press releases, and more. Nevertheless, he is a calm and productive person who, from what I learned through this interview, is passionate about giving back to the next generation.

Becoming a Senior Marketing and Communications Director wasn't Lanard's original plan when he started college. Driven by the desire to advocate for his community through writing, Lanard attended Wayne State University to study journalism. During college, he was a member of an honors program known as The Journalism Institute for Media Diversity. "They had a big focus on creating a pipeline of diverse journalists to go into newsrooms and ensure that all communities were being covered correctly," Lanard explained. He mentioned that the program was very rigorous, requiring students to maintain a 3.0 GPA and work at media-related internships each semester. Lanard stated that if students failed to meet these requirements, they would lose their scholarships. Despite this, Lanard was grateful to be part of the program because he was able to receive mentoring and connect with journalists.

As difficult The Journalism Institute for Media Diversity was, it did a great job in helping Lanard land an impressive fellowship. In 2008, he landed a fellowship for the International Radio and Television Society. According to him, this fellowship was not easy to get as he stated, “It’s around 800-1,000 applicants, and they only choose 30.” Landing this fellowship was very exciting for him as it meant he’d get all-expense paid experience in New York City. Although he was on track to become a reporter, Lanard decided not to pursue journalism as a career.

In the interview, Lanard opened up to me about his career shift. “I sort of had a midlife crisis, even though I was twenty-two,” he stated. He explained how he was not passionate about becoming a reporter or journalist but still wanted to use storytelling as part of his career. He explored his options and decided to work in public relations. While he was making this switch, Lanard talked to his mentors and past connections for help. Luckily, many of his mentors went through a similar experience and guided him throughout his process.

In 2022, Lanard found his space in DEGC. “I wanted to work in a place where I see the value of diversity in the work that they do, and also in their staff,” he stated. Before joining DEGC, Lanard worked at a university where diversity wasn’t prioritized or valued. Detroit has a community of diverse people who want to rebuild the city by opening a local business, and DEGC helps them on their path to success. “I need to see how my work is helping people,” Lanard quoted. Working at DEGC has been a tremendous eye-opener for him. Working for an organization that makes dreams into reality for Detroiters is a rewarding experience.

Life may not always end the way you planned it, but it’s the way you perceive the journey you took. Lanard did choose to leave journalism behind, but not his successful

experiences. Writing, reporting, and interviewing are what Lanard mastered in his internships and is using in his current role at DEGC. The difference is that he's representing the organization he works for instead of as a news reporter. Bringing his skills into DEGC was what made his transition to public relations easier. And his advice to future professionals is to gain as much experience as they can and be confident. "You're there for a reason, there's a value you bring into these places," he stated.