

Jewish Roots Inspire Security Executive's Business

By Justin Katz

Michael Rogers initially attended Cornell University to become a veterinarian; that didn't go as planned, so he switched to business. The business he started took inspiration from his childhood.

"When you grow up as a Jew in the Bronx, you see guys with tattoos on their arms from Auschwitz," Rogers told *Inc. 5000* in 2014. "You get the feeling that if it weren't for the United States, your people would be gone. So I had this blood debt. I really wanted to protect people."

Rogers, 57, a resident of Owings Mills, is the founder and CEO of Baltimore-based Securityhunter, a company that provides security solutions to the federal government. Last month, the company announced a \$200 million contract to provide security systems and support services for 1,500 Social Security Administration locations.

"It's a wonderful point when you learn to risk everything, you persevere and you make it. It's a hell of a feeling."

— Michael Rogers, CEO and founder of Securityhunter

The company, founded in 1987, has managed to go from "a small mom-and-pop shop," said Alex Elbert, chief technology officer, to one of the country's top 20 security dealers with

revenue nearing \$50 million; and no small part of that is due to Rogers' work ethic.

"Michael has had tremendous success in pursuing federal opportunities and is very efficient in the way he does business," said Elbert, who initially joined the company as its fourth employee and returned as CTO two years ago. "He surrounds himself with professionals who know how to operate a business and is [very] successful at doing that."

Although the company started in the commercial sector, Rogers decided to pursue federal business about 16 years ago. Since then, Rogers has landed contracts with the Navy, the Social Security Administration and the Department Health and Human Services.

"As I got older, I found that I was gravitating toward military books and reading a lot of books about the Holocaust,"

said Rogers. "[I was inspired by] people who served our country with distinction and the people who endured, not just as a survivor, but as a victor. They reached inside



Michael Rogers, CEO of Securityhunter, has turned his business into one of the country's top 20 security dealers.

themselves and made a life for themselves when they came out."

Rogers uses the stories as an inspiration for his life and work, and his commitment is matched by the commitment many of his employees have to him.

"I have seen the company flat on the ground," said Irene Montague, who has worked at Securityhunter for 16 years. "Yet, [Rogers] never gave up on building the company. He just amazes me because he's never idle."

Montague, who works in human resources, described Rogers as someone who "wears his heart on his sleeve" and who "doesn't have a problem saying thank you." This makes putting in a few extra hours here and there an easy decision for her. "I

don't mind doing it [because] he appreciates what you do."

Rogers added that people have misunderstood his kindness for weakness, and as a result he's dealt with threats, embezzlement and extortion, but "you grow up, you learn, you figure things out."

Persevering through challenges is a big part of Rogers' advice to young professionals.

"A lot of young people will start a job and they climb two rungs of the company ladder. Then they have a tough time and they start a new job," said Rogers. "They don't give themselves enough of a chance to [succeed]. It's a wonderful point when you learn to risk everything, you persevere, and you make it. It's a hell of a feeling." Jr

jkatz@midatlanticmedia.com