

# FAIR+EQUITABLE

FEBRUARY 2025 | VOLUME 23 | NUMBER 1

## THE HIDDEN IMPACT OF LEADERSHIP CHOICES

A supervisor's  
decisions can  
ripple beyond  
the workplace.

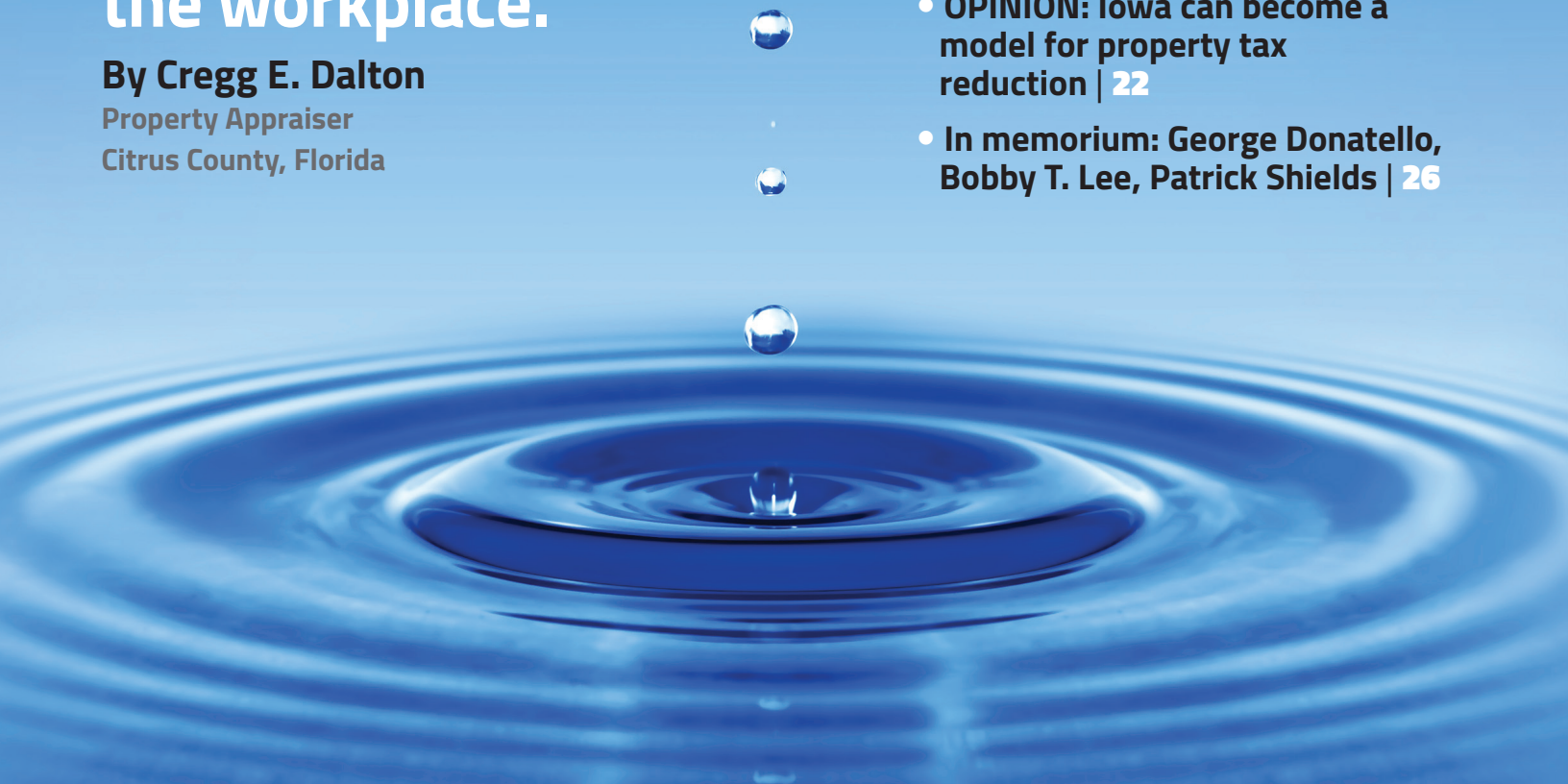
By Cregg E. Dalton

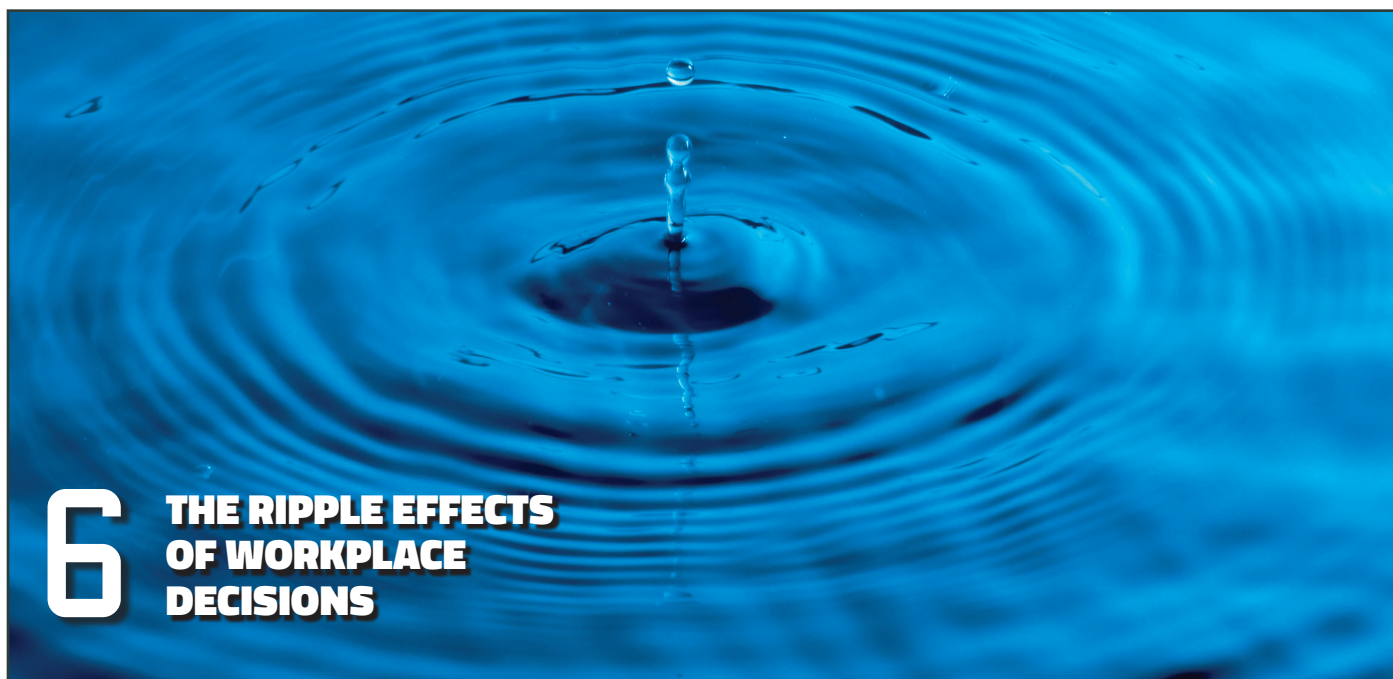
Property Appraiser  
Citrus County, Florida

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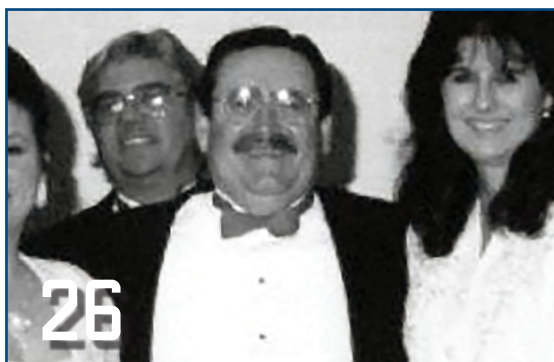
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## NOMINATE A PEER FOR AN AWARD

IAAO takes pride in recognizing achievements in the assessment industry, and nominations for 2025 will be accepted soon.



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## IN MEMORIAM

IAAO notes the passing three long-time members: 1995 President George Donatello (above, center); and former board members Bobby T. Lee and Patrick Shields.



IAAO

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION  
of ASSESSING OFFICERS

*Valuing the World*

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*Fair+Equitable* is published nine times a year by the International Association of Assessing Officers, 314 W. 10th St., Kansas City, Missouri, 64105-1616.

Subscription rate for members is included in annual dues. Send address changes to: Membership Dept., IAAO, 314 W. 10th St., Kansas City, Missouri, 64105-1616.

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# The ripple effect of leadership

*A supervisor's decisions have a profound impact that extends far beyond the workplace, influencing not just employees but also their families and personal lives.*

BY CREGG E. DALTON

**A** strong leader sets a clear vision for the organization. A good leader inspires and motivates employees while fostering a positive work environment.

An effective leader makes informed decisions that are critical to

navigating challenges

A confident leader handles conflict fairly and diplomatically, maintaining harmony among the team.

A talented leader invests in the growth and development of the team.

A driven leader demonstrates integrity and accountability to build

trust amongst employees.

An encouraging leader fosters innovation and embraces change when guiding an organization through necessary transitions.

Leaders who do not exhibit these traits not only harm the organization but can also have a significant impact on employees' personal lives.

The effects can extend beyond the workplace and influence an employee's family relationships, mental and physical health, and overall quality of life.

In 2017, before my election as the Citrus County Property Appraiser, I was a law enforcement sergeant working for our local sheriff's office.

This is where I met an amazing woman, Nancy. She was a military widow who'd lost her husband to the war in Iraq in 2004.

She'd been raising two children alone for more than a decade. Her daughter, Savannah, was in eighth grade when her mother and I met.

As you can imagine, Savannah did not welcome my presence in their lives.



*Cregg Dalton*

Gradually, over several years, through small acts of kindness, continuous encouragement, and being a constant presence in her life, I built a strong relationship with Savannah, and she came to

fully understand that I only wanted to be a positive influence in her life

Eventually, Nancy and I got married in 2019.

Fast forward to Savannah's junior year of high school. She was nominated for junior homecoming court, a big deal in the young life of a high school student.

Wanting to follow the school's tradition where the fathers of the homecoming candidates drive their daughters around the football field during the halftime ceremony, Savannah came to me and asked that I be her driver.

I was speechless. And honored.

And filled with so much pride for the years of persistence and patience it took to create the bond between us.

A promotional poster for the GIS/VALUATION TECHNOLOGIES CONFERENCE 2025. The background is a dark blue topographic map with yellow contour lines. The main title "GIS/VALUATION TECHNOLOGIES CONFERENCE" is in large, bold, white and yellow letters. Below it, "2025" is in red. The dates "MARCH 3 - 6 / COLUMBUS, OHIO" are in white on an orange background. At the bottom, there are logos for IAAO (International Association of Assessing Officers), GEO SPATIAL (International Network of Geospatial Professionals), and a QR code. On the right side, a vertical blue banner reads "HOTEL DEADLINE IS FEB. 7".



I told everyone about Savannah's request, including my detectives and my commanding officer.

I was so excited to participate in Savannah's homecoming event.

I promised Savannah that I would be there for her, no matter what, especially since the loss of her father was such a painful and life-altering experience for her.

The homecoming ceremony was scheduled for a Friday at 6 p.m.

While at work that day, a few of my detectives wanted to speak with a suspect about some stolen property.

It was a typical investigation for our unit, one which in the past we'd done hundreds of times.

Shortly after 9 in the morning, my team headed out the door en route to the perpetrator's residence while I stayed at the office to complete some search warrants.

Less than an hour later, I heard one of my detectives yelling over the office radio that the subject was barricaded in his residence with possible firearms.

I jumped in my patrol car and headed to the scene. On my way, I contacted our Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) team, who are trained in these types of situations.

We arrived within 15 minutes, followed by my commanding officer.

At this point, the scene was turned over to our SWAT team, and we were technically relieved of our responsibility, but we stayed to assist.

This is the part of the story where decisions made by leadership can have a significant impact on an employee's personal life.

Savannah asking me to escort her for homecoming was a pivotal moment in my life, in Savannah's life, and in our family's life.

Additionally, I had an extreme loyalty to my profession and a deep

sense of obligation to my detectives.

We live in a small town. Our sheriff's office employs roughly 150 law enforcement officers. We all know each other fairly well.

And almost everyone knows the story about my wife, how she lost her first husband to the war in Iraq and had to raise two small children on her own.

We'd been at the subject's house for close to four hours. There were at least 20 officers at the scene.

Throughout the day, with the subject still barricaded in his house, my detectives, as well as several members of the SWAT team, continually reminded me not to be late for Savannah's homecoming ceremony.

At around noon, I approached my commanding officer and asked to leave to attend Savannah's homecoming ceremony.

He immediately said no, without explanation, and without reservation.

When I began to explain that my counterpart on the other side of our jurisdiction had driven over and offered to take over for me, my commanding officer wouldn't even let me finish my sentence.

I requested once again to leave by explaining to my boss about the situation regarding the special operations team, the coverage we had on the nearby roads, and my obligation to my new family.

He again said no.

I waited another hour and repeated the same request. He again said no.

Others from our unit and the special operations team told this leader that I needed to go and that I wasn't needed on the scene.

He repeated his response.

Having to make the call to Savannah to tell her that I would not be able to drive her around the

football field for her homecoming night was devastating.

Though she said she understood, beneath her words was a raging river of unspoken emotion: hurt, disappointment, and a quiet sense of being let down, once again.

I never made it to the homecoming game.

The actions of a leader have a profound ripple effect that extends far beyond the workplace, influencing not just employees but also their families and their personal lives.

Leadership is more than just making decisions that affect an organization.

It shapes the culture, morale, and well-being of those who work under that leader.

Leaders who show compassion for the families of their employees create a more empathetic, supportive, and sustainable work environment.

In today's world, work and life are often intertwined, and employees are not just individuals but part of larger family systems that can deeply affect their work experiences.

When leaders recognize and support the needs of their employees' families, they foster loyalty, trust, and long-term commitment.

My relationship with Savannah has grown from that moment, as well as my relationships with employees, past and present, who work for me.

But that moment is a constant reminder of what leadership should and should not be about.

It's a moment in my life that I will never forget.

I hope this story resonates with you as you make decisions as a leader within your organization.

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