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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Coffman Engineers Principal, Robert Bigtas, Reaches 30-Year Career Milestone**  
Native Hawaiian Fire Protection Engineer Provides 30 Years of Service in the Pacific Region

**HONOLULU, HAWAII** (March 16, 2023) – Coffman Engineers, Inc. (Coffman) is pleased to announce a 30-year career milestone for Fire Protection Engineering Principal, Robert Bigtas, PE, FSPE. Since 1992, he has been a trailblazer as a fire protection engineer having successfully executed over \$80 million in services in the Pacific.

Pacific Region Managing Principal, John Thielst said, “Robert’s career is marked by his dedication to this profession, his loyalty to clients, and Coffman. We congratulate him on this significant milestone and look forward to his leadership for many years to come.”

Over Robert’s 30-year career, his depth of technical knowledge, passion, and client relationships has led to trusted partnerships with the local architectural and engineering communities as well as the U.S. Navy, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and Air Force. Robert has worked on more than 80% of all military bases in the Indo-Pacific and completed services on more than 90% of all military facilities in Guam.

His dedication and experience is celebrated by clients and colleagues across the industry:

“Congratulations Robert on making 30 years! It’s been a pleasure working with you these last 20+ years,” Kendall Ellingwood III, AIA, LEED AP, Design Partners Incorporated.

“I can always rely on him for thorough, up-to-date, and accurate information. Robert, congratulations on a great 30 years. Please keep going. We need you to keep us all at our best,” Francis T. Hino, PE, HDR.

“As the Prime, it is “reassuring” knowing that our clients and government engineers are familiar with Robert professionally and respect his fire protection experience and knowledge. Thanks for teaching engineering to us architects, but most of all, mahalo for being a true friend,” Warren Nakamura, WTN.

Robert was born and raised in North Kohala on the Big Island of Hawaii and graduated from the University of Hawaii at Manoa. He joined Hawaii’s first full-service fire protection engineering consulting firm, S.S. Dannaway Associates (SSDA) - the Pacific Rim’s leading fire protection engineering and building code consulting firm. SSDA joined

Coffman through an asset acquisition in 2016. Today, Robert Bigtas leads one of Coffman Honolulu's largest departments as Fire Protection Engineering Principal.

Robert embraces the true meaning of giving back to the community. He is the current President of the Society of Fire Protection Engineers (SFPE) Hawaii Chapter, an active member of his community neighborhood watch council, and values his deep-rooted relationship with the Hawaii Fire Departments. A recent achievement is being recognized by the national SFPE as a Fellow, a title given to members who are nominated by their peers and demonstrate dedication and significant contributions to the profession.

Robert credits his career success to those who paved the way for fire protection engineering in Hawaii and fellow principal, Jay Higashi, whom he has worked with for 29 years. "Jay is my partner in crime, and I credit most of my success to him. I'm also grateful to have learned from Sam Dannaway. He is a pioneer in this industry and had the foresight to train up leaders around him."

When asked what advice he would you give to someone starting their career in engineering, he answered, "Don't be afraid to do the heavy lifting – you need to identify where you want to be and what are you willing to do to get there. I learned early on that I needed to be the hardest worker in the room to realize and achieve the goals I set forth."

Robert's work ethic has been shaped by his community in Hawaii and has carried him the past three decades. This same determination is what he will lean on as he trains up the next generation of leaders. He looks forward to the decades to come serving his clients and colleagues in the Pacific region.

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### **About Coffman Engineers**

Coffman Engineers, Inc. is an ENR 500 ranked multidiscipline engineering firm with 20 offices across the contiguous 48 states as well as Hawaii, Guam, and Alaska. For more than 44 years, Coffman has provided engineering support to projects across a multitude of sectors; those services include civil, structural, mechanical, electrical, fire protection, process piping, instrumentation and controls, corrosion control, project management, commissioning, land survey services, and more. Visit [coffman.com](http://coffman.com) or learn more on social media.



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Photos: Robert Bigtas headshot

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