

P.C. ROSSIN COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING & APPLIED SCIENCE

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A century later, Beedle's legacy lives on

The 100th birthdate of Dr. Lynn Beedle, a man known for his contagious passion for tall buildings, occurs December 7, 2017.

At Lehigh University in 1969, Beedle founded the Joint Committee on Tall Buildings, a group comprised of the International Association of Bridge and Structural Engineers (IABSE) and the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE). The organization, now known as the **Council on Tall Buildings and Urban Habitat (CTBUH)**, is the world's leading resource for professionals focused on the inception, design, construction and operation of tall buildings and future cities.

Beedle was a Lehigh professor and former director of the **Fritz Engineering Laboratory**. He joined Lehigh as a research instructor in 1947, becoming a full professor 10 years later. Beedle earned a doctorate in structural engineering in 1952 and became a university distinguished professor of civil engineering in 1978.

Beedle was also responsible for raising needed funds for the establishment of the Fazlur Rahman Khan Endowed Chair of Structural Engineering and Architecture position held since 2006 by **Dan M. Frangopol**, professor of civil engineering at Lehigh. The fundraising effort ultimately culminated in the birth of the **Fazlur R. Khan Distinguished Lecture Series** in 2007.

The distinguished lecture series, initiated by Dr. Frangopol, honors Fazlur Rahman Khan, a legacy in structural engineering and architecture. Khan's pragmatic vision ushered in a renaissance in skyscraper construction during the second half of the 20th century. His progressive ideas for efficient high-rise construction resulted in many works, including Chicago's 100-story John Hancock Center as well as the 110-story Willis (formerly Sears) Tower, the second-tallest building in the U.S. after One World Trade Center and the 16th tallest in the world.

Beedle was inducted into the National Academy of Engineering (NAE) in 1972 for his contributions to steel structures research and design practice, especially plastic design and residual stress effects.

"I feel honored to say that I not only assisted Dr. Beedle in those fundraising efforts, but have now come full circle by assisting with the Khan Lecture Series which came as a result of those efforts," said Geri Kery, Coordinator of the Fazlur R. Khan Endowed Chair at the ATLSS Center.

In 2002, CTBUH honored Beedle's dedication and professional contribution through the creation of the Lynn S. Beedle Lifetime Achievement Award.

The enthusiasm Beedle showed toward his chosen profession and his alma mater extends to his family. Beedle's grandson, Max, is currently pursuing a masters in structural engineering at Lehigh and is scheduled to graduate in 2019.

Beedle's passion also lives on in the Khan lecture series. Since its founding in 2007, of the 37 distinguished speakers, seven of them – Mark Sarkisian, Peter Weismantle, John Fisher, Masayoshi Nakashima, Ted Galambos, John Kulicki and Surendra Shah – have been Lehigh graduates; the last five are members of the NAE. Leslie E. Robertson, who spoke in 2009, received an honorary doctorate in engineering from Lehigh.

The 2018 Khan lecture series runs February through April.

- Mary Anne Lynch

December 7, 2017

Related Links

- [2018 Fazlur R. Khan Distinguished Lecture Series](#)
- [The Fazlur Rahman Khan Distinguished Lecture Series Historical Poster: 2007-2018](#)
- [Lynn Beedle, 'a world engineer,' dies at 85](#)
- [Program book for the First Annual Council on Tall Buildings and Urban Habitat Awards Dinner held in Lynn Beedle's honor](#)
- [ATLSS Engineering Center](#)
- [Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering](#)

Media Coverage

- [CTBUH Founder, Dr. Lynn Beedle, at 100](#)
- [CTBUH - A Historical Sketch by founder Lynn S. Beedle](#)
- [Lynn Beedle profile and news](#)
- [New York Times: Lynn S. Beedle, 85, Dies; An Expert on Tall Buildings](#)



Lynn Beedle stands outside Packard Laboratory in 2002.



Lynn Beedle cuts a cake replica of the Empire State Building (circa 1993).