



Council on Tall Buildings and Urban Habitat

[About CTBUH](#)
[Tall Buildings](#)
[Publications](#)
[Awards](#)
[Events](#)
[News](#)
[Shop](#)

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[Tall Buildings](#)
[Publications](#)
[Awards](#)
[Events](#)
[News](#)
[Global Tall News](#)
[Newsletter](#)
[CTBUH In the Media](#)
[Chinese Coverage](#)
[Shop](#)

President Obama recognizes CTBUH Former Chair Dr. Fazlur Rahman Khan

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In an address to the Muslim world, President Barack Obama paid tribute to the American Muslims who have enriched the United States, including Dr. Fazlur Rahman Khan who “built our tallest building”. Dr. Khan was known as the visionary and legendary structural engineer who designed the 110-story Sears Tower, which featured his innovative “bundled tube” design. Born in Dhaka, Dr. Khan graduated from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign then joined the firm of Skidmore Owings & Merrill where he became partner in 1966.

With strong ties to Dr. Lynn Beedle and the Council on Tall Buildings and Urban Habitat, Dr. Khan became chairman of CTBUH from 1979 until his untimely death in 1982. In 1983 Dr. Beedle began a campaign to raise money for an endowment to honor his colleague and close friend. This effort resulted in the endowing of a Fazlur Rahman Khan Chair in structural engineering and architecture at Lehigh University in Bethlehem, PA. Prof. Dan. M. Frangopol, an expert in structural reliability, optimization and life-cycle engineering was appointed as the first holder of the Khan Chair. His creation of the Khan Lecture Series, sponsored by Lehigh University’s Department of Civil & Environment Engineering and the Department of Art & Architecture, honors Dr. Khan’s legacy of excellence in structural engineering and architecture, bringing top level building professionals to Lehigh University each spring.

Dr. Fazlur Rahman Khan (1929-1982), one of the foremost structural engineers of the 20th century, epitomized both structural engineering achievements and creative collaborative efforts between architects and engineers. His ideas for his sky-scraping towers offered more than economic construction and iconic architectural images; they gave people the opportunity to work and live ‘in the sky’.

Along with the Khan Chair at Lehigh University, Dr. Khan’s selection as Construction’s Man of the Year by Engineering-News Record is commemorated by a plaque in the Onterie Center (446 E. Ontario, Chicago) and in 1998 Chicago honored Dr. Khan with an honorary street name. In 2004 the Council on Tall Buildings and Urban Habitat created the Fazlur Rahman Khan Medal which is awarded at the annual [CTBUH Awards Dinner](#) to recognize an individual who demonstrated excellence in design and/or research that has made a significant contribution to a discipline for the design of tall buildings and the built urban environment.