

# A grounded approach to skyscraper design

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## Prominent architect Jon Pickard to speak February 28 in the first installment of the 2020 Fazlur R. Khan Distinguished Lecture Series

Skyscrapers make a mark on society that extends far beyond the urban skyline.

"Tall buildings have the ability to define corporations, cities, and even nations," says world-renowned architect Jon Pickard, principal at Pickard Chilton, who will open the 2020 [Fazlur Rahman Khan Distinguished Lecture Series](#) at Lehigh University in February. "As iconic as some towers may be perceived, their true success is in how they positively contribute to their cityscape and, perhaps most importantly, how they improve and enrich the lives of those who live and work every day in the community. As noted by [structural engineer and architect] Fazlur Rahman Khan, 'Life is art, drama, music, and most importantly, people.'"

In his [presentation](#), "Gracing the Sky, Enriching the City," Pickard will cite examples of tall buildings he has designed across the world as he addresses the responsibility architects of skyscrapers have in reimagining ground-level experiences to benefit both the public and the environment. The lecture takes place at 4:30 pm on Friday, February 28, in Whitaker Lab 303.

The Khan Lecture Series, co-sponsored by the Departments of [Civil and Environmental Engineering](#) and [Art, Architecture, and Design](#), honors Dr. Fazlur Rahman Khan's legacy of excellence 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 United States after One World Trade Center and the 16th tallest in the world.

Pickard has been recognized internationally for his achievements in architecture. He has designed or collaborated in the design of some of the world's most recognized buildings, including such prominent projects as the ExxonMobil Global Campus, 609 Main, and BG Group Place, all in Houston; Norfolk Southern's new headquarters and 1180 Peachtree in Atlanta; Northwestern Mutual's headquarters in Milwaukee; the Devon Energy Center in Oklahoma City; 300 North LaSalle in downtown Chicago; and the CalPERS Headquarters Complex in Sacramento.

"Jon Pickard is known for his innovative and cutting-edge design of buildings that shape corporate identity while enriching the workplace and community," says [Dan M. Frangopol](#), the inaugural holder of the Fazlur Rahman Khan Endowed Chair of Structural Engineering and Architecture at Lehigh. "We look forward to hearing his multifaceted perspective during the 2020 Khan Lecture Series." Frangopol initiated the lectures in 2007 and has since served as the organizer of the series.

Pickard earned his bachelor's degree in architecture from Iowa State University and his master's degree from the Yale School of Architecture. He has lectured extensively at academic institutions and currently serves on the Yale School of Architecture Dean's Council. Prior to the founding of Pickard Chilton, which is based in New Haven, Conn., he collaborated with Cesar Pelli over a period of 18 years in the design of numerous landmark and award-winning projects, including the World Financial Center in New York and Kuala Lumpur City Centre, a development that included the Petronas Towers.

The 2020 Khan Lecture Series continues on March 20 with Phillip L. Gould, distinguished adjunct professor at St. Louis University and senior professor at Washington University in St. Louis. Gould will present "From Slide Rule to FEA: Some Stops Along the Way." The final installment takes place on April 17, when Gregory Deierlein will deliver his lecture, "From Performance-Based Engineering to Urban Resilience." Deierlein is John A. Blume Professor in the School of Engineering at Stanford University.

*Story by Katie Kackenmeister, assistant director of communications, P.C. Rossin College of Engineering and Applied Science*

### Related Links:

- [2019 Fazlur R. Khan Distinguished Lecture Series](#)
- [Speaker Profile: Jon Pickard, Pickard Chilton](#)
- [Faculty Profile: Dan M. Frangopol](#)

### Media Coverage:

- [BusinessWire \(Sept. 25, 2013\): Northwestern Mutual Unveils Pickard Chilton's Design of New High-Rise Office Tower in Milwaukee](#)

### Department/Program:



Pickard Chilton principal Jon Pickard will present "Gracing the Sky, Enriching the City" on February 28 to begin the 2020 Fazlur Rahman Khan Distinguished Lecture Series at Lehigh University.



Rendering of Northwestern Mutual Tower in Milwaukee skyline (c)Studio AMD (Photo: Business Wire)



Model of Northwestern Mutual Tower in Milwaukee (c)Hedrich-Blessing (Photo: Business Wire)