

Dr. Nemkumar Banthia



"The quest for knowledge has just begun"

Dr. Nemkumar Banthia was recently inducted as a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada (RSC) – the highest honour a scholar can achieve in the Arts, Humanities and Sciences in Canada. The award was recently conferred at a ceremony held in Ottawa where Dr. Banthia was cited for his contributions to education and advancement of knowledge and for leading-edge research in the specific areas of infrastructure rehabilitation, structural strengthening using advanced composite materials and low carbon footprint construction materials.

The Royal Society of Canada was founded under the auspices of the Governor-General of Canada, the Marquis of Lorne, in 1882.

Dr. Banthia is a Professor of Civil Engineering, Distinguished University Scholar and a Senior Canada Research Chair at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada. He has been actively pursuing research in the areas of fibre reinforced cement-based and polymer-based composites, shotcrete, structural repair and strengthening, strain-rate effects, smart materials involving the use of carbon nanotubes, non-destructive condition assessment and structural health monitoring. He pioneered the most innovative method of earthquake strengthening using sprayed fibre reinforced polymers – a major breakthrough that earned him a place among the '25 most innovative people' in British Columbia.

Born in Nagpur (Maharashtra, India), Dr. Banthia received his education at the Visvesvaraya National Institute of Technology, Nagpur and the Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi. He received his PhD from the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada.

Dr. Banthia is a prolific writer. He has edited/co-edited eighteen volumes, published over 300 technical papers, and holds three international patents. A professional engineer in the province of British Columbia, Dr. Banthia serves on the technical committees of various professional societies including the American Concrete Institute where he chaired the committee on fibre reinforced concrete, RILEM where he chaired the Technical Committee on FRP-Concrete Bond, and the Canadian Standards Association where he chairs the Durability Committee of the Highway Bridge Design Code.

Dr. Banthia has further contributed to research by actively serving on the Editorial Boards of seven international Journals and as the Editor-in-Chief of the Journal of Cement and Concrete Composites. He also serves on five international granting councils in Asia, North America and Europe and on the Selection Boards of three major international awards in construction. He contributes regularly to The Indian Concrete Journal and has Guest Edited a special issue on Fibre Reinforced Concrete.



Professor Banthia receiving the honour of Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada

A mentor to over a hundred graduate students, Dr. Banthia has been bestowed with numerous other accolades including the WG Hislop Award of the American Concrete Institute BC Chapter, four Best Paper Awards, the Wason Medal from the American Concrete Institute International, 'Solutions Through Research' Award of the British Columbia Innovation Council, Wolfson Merit Award of the Royal Society of the United Kingdom, Distinguished Researcher Award of the Korea Concrete Institute, Killam Research Award from the Killam Foundation and the Horst Leipholtz Medal of the Canadian Society of Civil Engineering. Dr. Banthia is also a fellow of the American Concrete Institute, the Canadian Society for Civil Engineering, the Indian Concrete Institute and the Canadian Academy of Engineering.

Recalling his early years, Dr. Banthia says: "In my tenth grade, I had a mathematics teacher by the name of Mr. Lalit Jain. Mr. Jain had just joined the school as a young teacher. He was a gifted teacher who made mathematics fun by bringing in examples from real life, so we could see the relevance and role of lackluster mathematical equations in solving critical problems in science. With him and I would spend countless hours after class arguing over the nuances of mathematics. Unfortunately, just before the final Board exam, I fell sick and could not attend his classes. Normally, any other teacher would sign-off at that point, and leave the student to his or her own accord, but not Mr. Jain. He made sure that I got all the class notes and followed along. As if that was not enough, a day before the final

A student of Dr. Banthia says.....

I have been Dr. Banthia's graduate student for over 5 years now, and feel that he is an ideal supervisor. He is always passionate and energetic regarding research going on in the lab, and goes out of his way to take the initiative and lead on a variety of projects wherever he is working. All of his students agree that he is an excellent lecturer, and always makes course content interesting and informative. We congratulate him on his latest honor, and wish him all the best in his endeavours."

Sudip Talukdar,
University of British Columbia, Canada

exam, he came home to see if I needed any help. To my utter surprise, he had just taken a one-hour long ride on his old bicycle in pouring rain simply to come and help me with mathematics! I was speechless. The experience transformed me completely and utterly as that day I saw his passion for teaching, dedication to students and his immense and unfailing generosity towards what he believed in. I secured the highest marks in mathematics that year, but I never saw this as my personal achievement. It was the triumph of a 'team' with Mr. Jain as its 'coach'."

"They may forget what you said but they will never forget how you made them feel." - Carol Buchner

Reminiscing his recognition as a research scholar at the University of British Columbia, Dr. Banthia says "I was fortunate to work with Professor Mindess. In him, I saw a child-like curiosity that was not only contagious and inspiring, but also the best catalyst one can have for ground-breaking discovery. On the day I graduated, Professor Mindess told me something very simple. He said, "You have earned a doctorate only if you think the quest for knowledge has just begun. You have not earned doctorate if you think you know all about your subject". I will never forget that advice which has always uplifted me and motivated me to do more in research."

"The great end of education is to discipline rather than to furnish the mind; to train it to the use of its own powers rather than to fill it with the accumulation of others." - Tyron Edwards