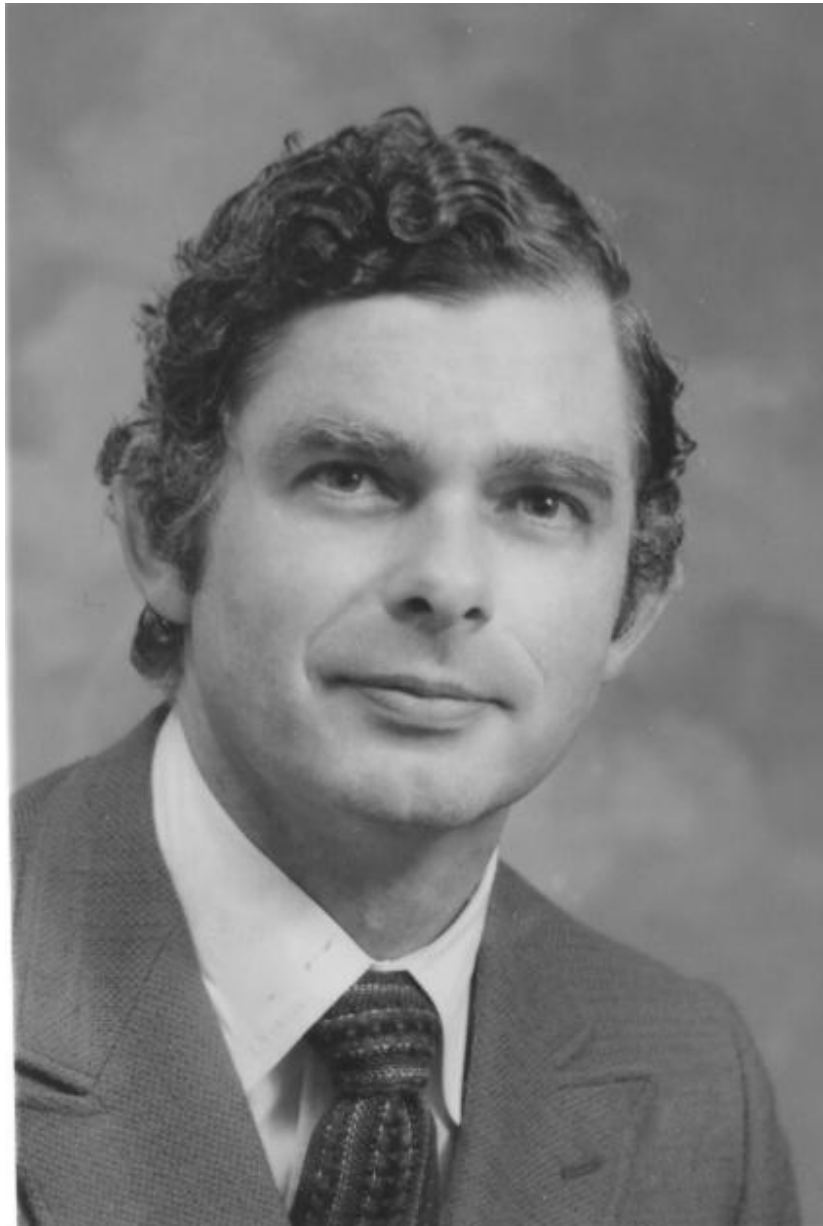


Alan G. Davenport
1932-2009



Dr. Alan G. Davenport, BA (Cambridge University), MA (University of Toronto), PhD (University of Bristol), Professor Emeritus of Engineering at the University of Western Ontario, died July 19, 2009, in London, Ontario, after a long struggle with Parkinson's disease. He was 76.

Dr. Davenport had a love of flying and fascination with the wind which led to many scientific breakthroughs and international recognition.

He was born on September 19, 1932, in Madras, India, now known as Chennai, where the roof of his family's home was secured with sandbags for protection against tropical storm winds. However, he grew up in South Africa where he attended Michaelhouse, a full boarding senior school for boys. There he displayed an aptitude for math and sciences, a love of sports, and a strong and independent mind.

Davenport left South Africa to attend Cambridge University where he earned a BA in Mechanical Sciences in 1954. As a student at Cambridge, Davenport joined the air squadron and flew between lectures.

His passion for engineering took him to Canada where he earned an MA in Civil Engineering from the University of Toronto. After completing his studies, he flew with the Canadian Navy. He later joined the National Research Council where he worked on building design codes and first developed an interest in wind loads.

He returned to England to complete his PhD at the University of Bristol in 1961, studying the effects of turbulent wind on long bridges and tall buildings.

Davenport was then recruited to the University of Western Ontario's Faculty of Engineering, then in its infancy, and went on to establish The Boundary Layer Wind Tunnel Laboratory in 1965. The laboratory soon became an international leader in research and testing.

As well as advancing scientific knowledge of wind, Davenport was part of numerous innovative design studies on major structures. Many of the tallest buildings and largest bridges in the world were tested in the laboratory.

Davenport pioneered the application of boundary layer wind tunnels to the design of wind-sensitive structures, the description of urban wind climates and other problems involving the action of wind.

He also contributed to the fields of meteorology, environmental loads, structural dynamics, and earthquake loading. He developed the world's first statistically based seismic zoning map for Canada and wrote more than 200 papers, while also lecturing around the world.

Davenport was an engineering consultant on many major structures, including the world's tallest

and longest: the World Trade Center in New York City, the Sears Tower in Chicago, the CN Tower in Toronto, the Normandy Bridge in France, the Great Belt East Suspension Bridge in Denmark, and the Tsing Ma Bridge in Hong Kong, as well as many others.

These and other projects catapulted the University of Western Ontario's wind tunnel into international fame, building a lasting reputation for wind expertise.

His research and contributions are extensive and earned him numerous awards and accolades throughout his career, including Canada's highest honor for lifetime achievement when he was appointed a member of the Order of Canada in 2002. He was also elected to the Royal Society of Canada in 1972.

Davenport was the founding editor of the Canadian Journal of Civil Engineering and was on the editorial board of six others. In 1967, he was a founding member of the Canadian Academy of Engineering, became vice-president in 1991 and was eventually elected president in 1992.

In 1987, he became a foreign associate in the National Academy of Engineering, the same year he was elected a foreign member of the Fellowship of Engineering in England.

In retirement, Davenport remained active with the Alan G. Davenport Wind Engineering Group, named in his honor at Western's Boundary Layer Wind Tunnel Laboratory. In one of his last projects, he was a founding member of the Western-based Institute for Catastrophic Loss Reduction—a centre aimed at reducing loss caused by severe weather and earthquakes.

At the time of his death, Davenport was survived by his wife Sheila, his four children, nine grandchildren and his brother.

Credits to the University of Western Ontario