

MILOS NOVAK (1925–1994)



Milos Novak received his degree in civil engineering in 1949 from the Czech Technical University (CVUT) in Prague, Czechoslovakia. Following successful completion of a PhD program in mechanics at the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences (CSAV) in 1957, he moved to a research position at the Institute of Theoretical and Applied Mechanics of CSAV, where he reached the position of leading scientist.

In 1967, during a period of relaxation of the communist dictatorship in Czechoslovakia, Dr. Novak was allowed a one-year leave-of-absence at the University of Western Ontario (now Western University) to conduct research at its Boundary Layer Wind Tunnel Laboratory. After Russian tanks crushed the Prague Spring in 1968, he accepted an offer of a permanent faculty position at Western. He quickly earned a reputation as an outstanding teacher and researcher.

Considered one of the foremost world experts in dynamics of civil engineering structures and foundations, Professor Novak published over 160 refereed papers. He was a member of the editorial boards of the *Journal of Soil Dynamics and Earthquake Engineering* and the *International Journal of Software and Engineering Workstations*. He made important contributions to earthquake engineering, particularly dynamic structure-soil interactions; to wind engineering, particularly 'galloping instability'; and to the action of waves on structures. He developed powerful computer programs for suspension bridges, transmission lines, guyed masts, tall chimneys, nuclear power plants, and offshore oil rigs.

Professor Novak engaged actively in outreach to other researchers and practising engineers. Over the years, he taught short specialized courses at leading universities and research laboratories in many countries, including Canada, the United States, Japan, China, India, Australia, and New Zealand. He served as a consultant on nuclear power plants in Germany, Switzerland, Brazil, Finland, and Yugoslavia; on large offshore towers in Texas, Venezuela, China, and Canada; on the Trans-Canada pipeline and Polar Gas Pipeline; and on numerous foundations for turbine generators, compressors, and paper mill machines.

He was a consultant, as well, to the United Nations on projects in India and Yugoslavia, and on the Chinese University Development Project. He was also a U.N. expert advisor to Armenia on earthquake-resistant structural design. In 1986, the Japan Society of Building Research held the *"Novak Symposium on Dynamics of Embedded Foundations and Piles."*

The Czech Technical University, Dr. Novak's alma mater, awarded him an honorary doctorate in 1993. He also received the Medal for Research and Development from the Association of Professional Engineers of Ontario, the Medal of Merit from the Czech Society for Mechanics, and the Gold Medal from the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences.

Professor Novak is remembered by the Milos Novak Memorial Award at the Geotechnical Research Centre at Western University.