The Times

COUNCIL ON TALL BUILDINGS AND URBAN HABITAT

International Association for Bridge and Structural Engineering • American Society of Civil Engineers
American Institute of Architects • American Planning Association • International Union of Architects
American Society of Interior Designers • Japan Structural Consultants Association
Urban Land Institute • International Federation of Interior Designers

Council Elects New Chairman

Dr. R. Shankar Nair, senior vice-president of Teng & Associates, Inc., in Chicago, has been elected Chairman of the Council. He officially took over the duties from **Dr. Gilberto Do Valle** of Projest SA Empreendimentos e Servicos Tecnicos, Rio de Janeiro, at a gavel-passing ceremony that took place on July 10th atop the Sears Tower.

Dr. R. Shankar Nair

In turning over his duties, Do Valle noted the changes that are occuring in the organization of the Council, and wished Nair good luck in his new post, with the good-natured warning: "by the way, it will not be easy!"

Dr. Nair, as he noted in his own address, is the first Chicagoan since **Fazlur Khan** to hold the title of Council Chairman. He comes from a background of active involvement with the Council, serving as Publications Committee Chairman for six years and Chairman of the Committee on Leadership and Scope for three years. In 1996, he was appointed Vice Chairman of the Council representing North America.

Formerly principal and vice-president of Baltimore based RTKL Associates, Inc., from 1988 to 1995, Nair returned to Chicago to his roots as structural engineer of many of the city's tall buildings of 30 to 70 stories. Prior to moving to Baltimore, he was principal and senior vice president of KKBNA Inc., principal and chief structural engineer of Alfred Benesch & Company, and an independent consulting engineer. He received his Ph.D. from the University of Illinois, Urbana in 1969.

Dr. Nair's work has been noted for the application of innovative structural engineering to large architectural and civil engineering projects. For the Chicago Mercantile Exchange Center, for example, he conceived a structural design that cantilevers two 40-story office towers over the largest column-free trading hall in the U. S. by means of a unique shear diaphragm transfer system. At 900 North Michigan, different needs were accommodated by stacking a 40-story concrete structure atop a 30-story steel structure. At the 36-story Morton International office building, on a site over a railyard that had previously been considered undevelopable, the tower was placed on stilts above the tracks and part of the building was suspended from trusses on the roof.

Nair has received many professional awards for his work, and brings to the Council a unique insight not only into the world of tall buildings and the urban environment, but also into the organizational workings of the Council itself. We welcome him to his three-year term as he takes the Council into the next century, and to the Sixth World Congress in Melbourne in 2000.

Ceremony Atop Sears Tower Draws Media

The "gavel-passing" ceremony that took place on the roof of the Sears Tower in July attracted the attention of the media, as the Council formally announced the addition of three more categories of height measurement. This announcement again stirred the flames of controversy that had surrounded the official crowning a year ago of the Petronas Twin Towers as the world's tallest.

The Council's four height categories are:

1. Height to structural or architectural top
2. Height to highest occupied floor
3. Height to top of roof
4. Height to tip of spire or antenna

At the Chicago ceremony, the Sears Tower received certificates for holding the record in categories 2 (highest occupied floor: 1431 feet) and 3 (highest rooftop: 1450 feet). New York's World Trade Center One holds the record for Category 4, highest to tip of spire or antenna, measuring 1728 feet to the tip of its communications antenna. Petronas Twin Towers, of course, continues to hold the record for Category One, highest to structural or architectural top, at 1483 feet—the controlling category for the Council's database.

Ironically, it was the existence of the Petronas spires that led to the consideration of other measures of height. Said **Shankar Nair** in his press address, it was "not an issue until then, since the world's tallest was tallest by any definition."

The tradition of including spires in height, said Nair, dates back to the Chrysler Building, and the tradition of excluding antennas goes back to New York's World Trade Center and the Sears Tower, where the designers did not include the antennas in its published height.

→ After four years of hard work on behalf of the Council, Dr. Gilberto M. B. Do Valle passes the gavel of Chairmanship to Dr. R. Shankar Nair.