



*Paul Reed*

## LYNN S. BEEDLE

1917–2003

Elected in 1972

*“For contributions to steel structures research and design practice,  
especially plastic design and residual stress effects.”*

BY JOHN W. FISHER

**L**YNN S. BEEDLE, University Distinguished Professor Emeritus of Civil Engineering, Lehigh University, died on October 30, 2003, at the age of 85.

Lynn was born on the San Francisco side of the Golden Gate Strait in Orland, California, on December 7, 1917, one of seven children of Granville and Carol (Simpson) Beedle. He grew up in the San Francisco area and was influenced by the construction and opening of the Golden Gate Bridge, which was completed in 1937. His attendance at the opening of the bridge and his observations during its construction contributed to his decision to focus on civil engineering as an undergraduate at the University of California, Berkeley. Lynn received a B.S. in civil engineering with a minor in architecture from the University of California, Berkeley in 1941.

After a short term of employment as an engineer at the Todd-California Shipbuilding Corporation in 1941, Lynn was commissioned as a naval officer at the beginning of World War II and began his military service as a student in naval architecture at the U.S. Navy Postgraduate School. His career in the Navy included instructor at the Postgraduate School of the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland; officer-in-charge of research on underwater explosions at the Norfolk Naval Shipyard in 1942; an assignment in the U.S. Navy Bureau of Ships in Washington, D.C.; participation in the 1946 Bikini atoll atomic bomb tests as

deputy officer in charge of the Ship Instrumentation Group there until 1947.

After the war, Lynn joined the faculty at Lehigh University as a research instructor in civil engineering. He received his M.S. in 1949 and Ph.D. in 1952, both from Lehigh. He was appointed assistant professor in 1952, full professor in 1957, and Distinguished University Professor in 1978. He became associate director of Fritz Engineering Laboratory in 1952 and director in 1960; he continued to serve the laboratory with distinction until 1984. He became Professor Emeritus in 1988.

As director of the Fritz Engineering Laboratory, he led research on the behavior and design of steel structures. His first textbook, *Plastic Design of Steel Frames* (John Wiley & Sons), was published in 1958. He was editor and co-author of the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) Manual 41, *Plastic Design in Steel*, which was published in 1961 and revised in 1971. He led the Lehigh team as editor of *Structural Steel Design*, published by Ronald Press in 1964. He was also editor in chief of several editions of *Structural Stability: A World View* and *The Planning and Design of Tall Buildings*, a monograph in five volumes published by McGraw-Hill. Altogether, Lynn was the author or co-author of more than 200 papers, articles, and books.

Lynn's stellar reputation and his promotion of research at Lehigh attracted graduate students from all over the United States and more than 30 other countries. He made it a point to meet with graduates of Lehigh during his many travels abroad.

In 1944, after the collapse of the Quebec Bridge during construction, the Structural Stability Research Council was organized to develop knowledge about the behavior and strength of compression elements. Lynn was director of the council for 23 years, from 1970 to 1993.

In 1969, Lynn founded the Council on Tall Buildings and Urban Habitat and served as director until he became Director Emeritus in 2000. Through his leadership and passionate dedication, the council brought together architects, structural engineers, construction workers, environmental experts, sociologists, and policy makers in an effort to provide a rationale for the construction of high-rise structures.

Lynn received many accolades and awards from local, national, and international organizations. Lehigh recognized his achievements with the Alfred Noble Robinson Award in 1952 and the R.R. and E.C. Hillman Award in 1973. In 1972, he became the first Lehigh faculty member elected to the National Academy of Engineering. Other notable awards were the ASCE Research Prize in 1955 and the Ernest E. Howard Award in 1963. The American Institute of Steel Construction awarded him the T.R. Higgins Lectureship Award in 1973 and the Geerhard Haaijer Award for Excellence in Education in 2003. The Franklin Institute awarded him the Frank P. Brown Medal in 1982.

In 1977, Lynn was elected an Honorary Member of the International Association of Bridge and Structural Engineers; in 1979, he was elected an Honorary Member of ASCE, and in 2002, he was given the ASCE Opal Award for Lifetime Achievement in Management. He was the first recipient of the International Contributions Award from the Japan Society of Civil Engineers in 1994. In 1995, the American Association of Engineering Societies honored him with the John Fritz Medal, one of the highest awards in the engineering profession. The University of California, Berkeley named him Distinguished Engineering Alumnus in 2000. In 1999, Lynn was recognized by *Engineering News Record* as one of the top 125 contributors to the construction industry during the 125-year period from 1874 to 1999.

Lynn's activities and awards brought Lehigh University significant recognition from around the world. It was largely through his efforts that funds (mostly from abroad) were raised for the Fazlur Khan Chair in Structural Engineering and Architecture and Bruce G. Johnston Chair in the P.C. Rossin College of Engineering and Applied Science.

Lynn lived to see three awards established in his honor. At a black-tie dinner in New York in 2002, the Council on Tall Buildings and Urban Habitat announced the establishment of the Lynn S. Beedle Achievement Award to be given annually to an individual for service to the building profession and the council. Also in 2002, the Structural Stability Research Council established the Lynn S. Beedle Award to be given to a leading stability researcher or designer from anywhere in the world for sig-

nificant contributions to the field. In 2003, the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering at Lehigh University established the Lynn S. Beedle Distinguished Civil and Environmental Engineering Award with Lynn as the first recipient.

Lynn is survived by Ella, his wife of 57 years; five children, Lynn Jr., Helen, Jonathan, David, and Edward; a brother, Richard, and two sisters, Carol Healy of Seattle and Jane Hildebrand of Chicago; nine grandchildren and one great grandchild.

