

Obituary

Prof KL Chopra
(July 31, 1933 – May 19, 2021)



Prof. Kasturi Lal Chopra, FNAE founder of Thin Film Laboratory (TFL) of IIT Delhi, former Director, IIT Kharagpur (2 terms beginning 1987) and former Professor & founder Dean (IRD), IIT Delhi breathed his last on 18 May late night due to COVID related complications. He was a recipient of INAE-Life Time Contribution Award in Engineering in 2013 and Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar Award in Physical Sciences in 1975 for specialization in Material Physics. In addition, IITD Golden Jubilee Committee honoured Prof. K L Chopra for his outstanding contributions. In August 1970, in one corner of the Physics of the Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi, a small group of research scholars led by Professor K.L. Chopra commenced work to build thin-film technology facilities. Thus, the nucleus of a Laboratory was born. Despite constraints of finances, personnel and equipment in the early years, rapid growth took place, helped to a large measure by the zeal, of Prof. Chopra.

A distinguished physicist and administrator, Prof Chopra was also a Padma Shri awardee. He moved to USA after graduation and post- Graduation from University of Delhi and earned Doctorate in in Low Temperature Physics from the University of British Columbia (1957). He continued his stay in the USA and worked at a large number of organizations in Canada and USA. He also researched at Fritz Haber Institute, Berlin, Philico-Ford Scientific Laboratory and had affiliation with R&D Groups at IBM, Westinghouse, ARCO, etc. In 1970 he returned to India and joined IIT Delhi as Senior Professor of Solid-State Physics and later became Head of Physics Department. He was Dean of Post Graduate Studies, Industrial R&D, and also Centre for Energy Studies at IIT Delhi. He served as Director, IIT Kharagpur for a decade. On superannuation, he continued as Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Chair Professor at IIT Delhi and was Chairman BoG of BBIT, Kolkata; HDF-SoM, Bhubaneswar, Honorary Professor of IIT D, IIT BB BESU, ITM And KFUPM of Saudi Arabia.

Prof Chopra set up the Thin Film and Micro science laboratories at IIT Delhi and IIT Kharagpur respectively and contributed greatly to the field of thin films, energy, and nano matter. He published over 430 papers in international journals; authored/edited ten books and supervised 100 MTech and 60 PhD Theses. Prof Chopra held six US Patents and transferring of 8 know-hows to his credit.

Prof Chopra stood for ethics and served as President, Society for Scientific Values. He was also President, Indian Vacuum Society; Vice- President, MRSI & EMSI; Chairman, International Conference on Thin Films & Solid Surfaces and member of several national and international committees in related fields. He was on the editorial Boards of many national and international journals such as Solar Energy Materials and Solar Cells.

Prof Chopra was recipient of Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar Award; PC Mahala Nobis Medal (1996); Aryabhata Medal (2004) and KS Krishnan Memorial Medal (1992). He was also conferred with numerous other awards such as Bhabha Award; FICCI Award; Bhasin Foundation Award; Biren Roy

Medal; Citation Laureate Award of ISI, USA and Distinguished Scientist/ Life Time Achievement Awards of Materials Research Society of India; Indian Vacuum Society & Solar Energy Society; IITD Freedom of the Institute Award; Distinguished Academician Award of IITP and D.Sc. (hc) of IIT Kharagpur and UPTU.

Prof KL Chopra was a Fellow of Indian National Academy of Engineering; Indian National Science Academy; Indian Academy of Sciences, Bangalore; National Academy of Sciences (India) and the American Physical Society. He served on INSA Council (1988-90).

“It is a huge loss to all his students and the entire academic fraternity. May God grant his soul eternal peace. We pray for the departed soul and for the family to have courage to bear this great loss. Our heartfelt condolences to his bereaved family.”

- TFL Family (May 19, 2021)

May God bless his soul to Rest in Peace