



DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARDS

Syed Mohammad Farouq Ali '62g, '64g



To S. M. Farouq Ali for achieving international prominence in teaching, research, and consulting in petroleum engineering.

With crude oil at record prices, S. M. Farouq Ali's expertise in heavy oil recovery is in high demand. As president of HOR-Heavy Oil Recovery Technologies in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, he travels the world advising oil companies on oil recovery techniques. Farouq Ali's combination of experimental and theoretical methods in steamflooding, integrated reservoir simulation, and scaled models has led to advances in techniques to recover the six trillion barrels of heavy oil still underground.

A native of India, Farouq Ali earned a bachelor's degree in electrical and mechanical engineering at the University of Karachi in Pakistan. With a scholarship from oil giant Esso, he earned another bachelor's degree in petroleum production engineering from Birmingham University in 1960. On the advice of a distinguished professor there, he applied to three major petroleum engineering schools, including Penn State. Accepted at all three schools, he ultimately chose Penn State, where he would remain for nearly 20 years.

Penn State hired Farouq Ali as an assistant professor after he completed his doctorate in 1964. He was promoted to full professor in 1972. It was in Pennsylvania that Farouq Ali first used steamflooding, injecting steam underground to thin the more viscous heavy oil making it easier to pump out. He left Penn State in 1979 seeking a new challenge as professor of petroleum engineering at the University of Alberta in Edmonton. Although he left that position in 1999 to devote himself full time to the consulting business he had started in 1984, Farouq Ali continues to teach part-time at the University of Calgary and the University of Regina in Saskatchewan. In 45 years of teaching and research, he's supervised more than 200 graduate students and authored more than 500 papers. He's also taught intensive short courses for the petroleum industry to more than 5,000 engineers in 26 countries.

As a consultant, Farouq Ali has designed more than 30 major oil fields projects and advised oil companies and governments on oil policy and production strategies. He's also in demand as a lecturer, having served as distinguished lecturer for the Society of Petroleum

Engineers in 1992 and 2003 and for the Petroleum Society of Canada in 1984.

Farouq Ali has received many honors throughout his distinguished career including the Society of Petroleum Engineers' Distinguished Achievement Award (1991) and their highest award, the Anthony F. Lucas Gold Medal (2007). In 1998, he received the Kapitsa Gold Medal from the Russian Academy of Sciences. The Kapitsa, named for the academy's former head and Nobel Laureate Pyotr Kapitsa, is given for work the academy considers of Nobel-Prize quality in fields where Nobel Prizes are not awarded. Farouq Ali is one of the few outside of Russia to receive the award.

Penn State has previously honored Farouq Ali with the Charles L. Hosler Alumni Scholar Medal (2000) and the Wilson Outstanding Teaching Award (1970) from the College of Earth and Mineral Sciences, the C. Drew Stahl Alumni Achievement Award from the Department of Energy and Geo-Environmental Engineering (1998), and the Centennial Fellow Award from the Department of Petroleum and Natural Gas Engineering (1996).

Despite his busy travel, consulting, and teaching schedule, Farouq Ali also studies languages. "I suppose my interest in languages comes from growing up in India where there are 17 official languages," he says. "I teach in Spanish when I'm in Venezuela, and I know Russian and about a dozen other languages with various proficiencies."

Farouq Ali and his wife, Razia, live in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. They have three grown children.

