

Padma Shri Prof. Kasturi Lal Chopra, FNA (31st July 1932 – 19th May 2021) passes away

A distinguished physicist and administrator, Padma Shri Prof. Kasturi Lal Chopra set up the Thin Film and Microscience laboratories at Indian Institute of Technology Delhi and Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur respectively and contributed greatly to the field of thin films, energy and nano matter.

Prof. Chopra was the recipient of SS Bhatnagar award, PC Mahalanobis Medal (1996), Aryabhata Medal (2004), and KS Krishnan Memorial Medal (1992). He was also conferred with numerous other awards 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 Soc & Solar Energy Society, IITD Freedom of the Institute Award, Distinguished Academician Award of IITP, DSc (hc) of IITK and UPTU.

He was also a Fellow of Indian Academy of Sciences, Bangalore, National Academy of Sciences (India), Prayagraj, National Academy of Engineering and the American Physical Society. He served on INSA Council (1988-90). He was in the Sectional Committee II.

He 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 as 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.

He moved to USA after graduation and post-graduation from University of Delhi and earned doctorate in Low Temperature Physics from the University of British Columbia (1957). He continued in the USA and worked at a number of other organisations in Canada and USA. He also researched at Fritz Haber Institute, Berlin, Philco-Ford Scientific Laboratory, and had affiliations with R&D groups at IBM, Westinghouse, ARCO, etc. He taught at Northeastern and Cornell Universities, USA. 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 Energy Centre at IIT-D. 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, Bhubneshwar, Honorary Prof of IITD, IITBB, BESU, ITM and KFUPM of Saudi Arabia.

He has published over 430 papers in international journals, authored /edited ten books and supervised 100 M Tech. and 60 PhD Theses. Prof. Chopra held six US patents and transferring of 8 know-hows to his credit.

DST is deeply grieved on losing such a distinguished technologist and an institution builder. We convey our condolence to the bereaved family.