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Roberto T. Leon received a B.S.C.E. degree from the U. of Massachusetts at Amherst in 1978, an M.S.C.E. from Stanford U. in 1979, and a Ph.D. from the U. of Texas at Austin in 1983. He joined the University of Minnesota – Twin Cities in 1983 as an assistant professor and Georgia Tech in 1994 as a full professor. He became the D.H. Burrows Professor of Construction Engineering at Virginia Tech in January 2012 and a C.E. Via Professor in 2021.

Dr. Leon's research focuses on dynamic behavior and design of composite and hybrid steel-concrete structures, testing of full-scale and model structures in the laboratory, and field instrumentation of structures. He has made original contributions in the areas of steel bolted connections, partially-restrained composite frames, composite joists, unreinforced masonry behavior, composite columns and innovative steel structural systems.

Among other positions, Dr. Leon has served as President of the Consortium of Universities for Research in Earthquake Engineering (CUREE), the Network for Earthquake Engineering Simulation (NEESinc), the Board of Governors of the Structural Engineering Institute (SEI) of ASCE and the Board of the Applied Technology Council (ATC).

Dr. Leon is very active in national and international technical committees. He has served in the Provisions Update Committee (PUC) of the Building Seismic Safety Council (BSSC), the Committee on Specification of the American Institute of Steel Construction (AISC), the Advisory Committee on Structural Safety of Veteran Administration Facilities (ADSS/VA), and numerous other technical committees of the American Concrete Institute (ACI), the American Iron and Steel Institute (AISI), the American Institute of Steel Construction (AISC), the Structural Engineering Institute (SEI/ASCE) and the International Association for Bridge and Structural Engineering (AIBSE).

He is a registered professional engineer in Minnesota, the co-author of a book on composite construction, a non-technical book on bridges and tunnels, the author and co-author of over 150 articles in refereed journals and lectures internationally on topics ranging from composite construction to seismic steel design. For his work, he has been awarded, among others, the AISC T.R. Higgins Award (1993), the ASCE Norman Medal (2000), and named as Distinguished Member American Society of Civil Engineers (2016).