

Attend the 2025 Concrete Innovation Forum

There is still time to secure a spot at the ACI Foundation's 2025 Concrete Innovation Forum, taking place August 12-14, 2025, at Hotel Clío in Denver, CO, USA. This event offers an opportunity for concrete professionals to connect directly with innovators, researchers, and industry leaders in a focused setting, with attendance limited to just 100 participants.

An afternoon tour of the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) in nearby Golden, CO, is offered on Tuesday afternoon, prior to the welcome reception that officially kicks off the event. Space is limited for this experience to visit a laboratory with numerous innovation awards and over 1000 active partnerships with industry, universities, foundations, and governments.

Wednesday will begin with a case study from Luna Lu, Vice President of Industry Partnerships and Reilly Professor of Civil Engineering at Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN, USA, who will share the challenges and successes of commercializing an innovation. David Shook, Associate Principal and Structural Engineer at Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, and Garrett Benisch, Director of Development for Bioforcetech Corporation, will follow with insights on product development and stakeholder engagement during the early adoption of biochar in concrete.

The Forum's last day will start with a presentation from John Kevern and Ana Aday, researchers at NREL, who will examine how national labs are helping to drive innovation in cement and concrete resilience. A mini panel on project success will highlight design phase collaboration from the viewpoints of the designer, developer, and producer. The Forum will close with a final presentation discussing the current outlook for reduced-carbon technologies and comparing public, private and domestic, and international perspectives. To register, visit www.acifoundation.org/innovation/forums.

Donor Spotlight: Pouria Ghods and Aali Alizadeh

From students to visionaries: Giatec's co-founders track their journey with ACI

Pouria Ghods and Aali Alizadeh's path began at the University of Tehran, Tehran, Iran, with a seminar organized by the local ACI Chapter on concrete technology followed by the announcement of the ACI High-Strength Concrete Cube Student Competition. They teamed up with a few classmates to participate in this event. Their first attempts in making high-strength concrete or even concrete itself were a mess. They watched as their early concrete mixtures failed to set, but with every setback came greater resolve. Mixing and testing in their lab, they sought the perfect concrete formula,

at one point even hand-mixing the materials with aggregate they had sourced through a long road trip across Iran. After months of hard work, they emerged victorious with a winning formula in the national competition, securing their place at the ACI Concrete Convention – Fall 2000 in Toronto, ON, Canada.

The competition in Toronto became a turning point in their lives. ACI's focus on empowering students through education and providing affordable access to conventions resonated deeply with the young scholars. The event introduced them to a community of concrete professionals, researchers, and industry leaders from around the world. They not only placed third in the student competition but also found a sense of purpose within the welcoming and supportive ACI community. "Competing at ACI changed everything," Alizadeh recalled. "We saw that concrete could be a powerful force for innovation and progress, and we wanted to be a part of it."

Forging a path into concrete science

Following their success in Toronto, Ghods and Alizadeh returned to Iran, inspired to apply their knowledge to solve local industry challenges. They established the Construction Materials Institute at the University of Tehran, a nonprofit initiative designed to address real-world issues in Iran's construction sector. They worked with local companies, developing concrete mixtures that could withstand Iran's diverse environmental conditions. They also created a facility for concrete testing in the marine environment for students and industry professionals to collaborate. In the years that followed, they pursued advanced degrees in Canada. Ghods focused on corrosion science, while Alizadeh studied cement nanoscience, both publishing extensively and presenting their research at ACI Conventions worldwide.

A vision born from passion and purpose

After graduation in 2010, Ghods and Alizadeh founded Giatec Scientific Inc., driven by the vision to bring new technologies to concrete monitoring and testing. They saw an industry still using age-old methods, and they set out to change that, knowing that innovation was essential for the longevity and safety of concrete structures.

A legacy of giving back

Now, as established industry leaders, Ghods and Alizadeh give back to the organization that inspired them. From sponsoring student competitions like the ACI Committee 123 Research in Progress Awards and The Giatec Paper Awards for Sustainability in Concrete to mentoring the next generation of engineers, they actively support ACI's mission. "The community at ACI empowered us, and we're honored to

be part of its legacy,” Ghods shared. “Supporting students today is our way of paying forward what ACI once gave to us.”

Inspiring a future of concrete innovation

Ghods’ and Alizadeh’s journey is far from over. From Giatec’s first product, RCON, to its latest artificial intelligence (AI)-driven solution Roxi™ that analyzes concrete sensor and mixture performance data for anomaly detection and smart suggestions, they are working to set new standards in concrete monitoring and performance, transforming the industry for a sustainable future. Their vision is clear: bring the full power of technology to concrete, making construction safer, more efficient, and more environmentally responsible.

Their advice to future civil engineers is “Dive in and don’t hesitate to reach out for support. The concrete community is here to help you, and there’s no limit to what you can achieve.” For today’s students and professionals looking to make a mark, Ghods’ and Alizadeh’s story serves as a reminder that with resilience, vision, and a community like ACI, innovation is within reach.



Ghods and Alizadeh attending the ACI Concrete Convention – Fall 2000 in Toronto



Ghods and Alizadeh starting their PhD studies in Canada in 2005

ACI Foundation is Now Accepting Fellowship and Scholarship Applications

The ACI Foundation is now accepting applications from undergraduate and graduate students for the 2026-2027 academic year. The ACI Foundation offers 47 fellowships and scholarships for high-potential students in concrete-related graduate and undergraduate degree programs.

ACI Foundation fellowships are offered to both undergraduate and graduate students pursuing a concrete-related degree at an accredited institution in the United States or Canada. Students in eligible countries can apply for the ACI Foundation MENA Student Excellence Award and the ACI Foundation Saudi Arabia Student Excellence Award. Students must obtain two endorsements, with one being from an ACI member. Fellowships provide the following benefits:

- An educational stipend of 10,000 USD;
- Airfare, hotel, travel stipend, and registration to attend two ACI Concrete Conventions (travel contingent upon state and country laws);
- Assignment to a mentor;
- An internship, if required; and
- Recognition at ACI Conventions, in *Concrete International*, and on the ACI Foundation’s website and social media.

ACI Foundation scholarships are also offered to undergraduate and graduate students pursuing a concrete-related degree or program. International students are eligible to apply for all scholarships that are not region-specific as defined by the sponsor. Among other requirements, students must obtain two endorsements with one of the endorsements being from an ACI member. Each ACI Foundation scholarship includes an educational stipend of 5000 USD (two of the scholarships are paid in CAD); and recognition in *Concrete International* and on the ACI Foundation’s website and social media.

The purpose of the ACI Foundation’s student fellowship and scholarship program is to identify, attract, and develop outstanding professionals for future careers in the concrete industry. The deadline for this application period is November 1, 2025. The full award cycle covers the 2026 fall semester through the 2027 spring semester. Additional details are available at www.acifoundation.org/scholarships.

ACI Foundation Celebrates New Trustees and Re-Election of an Existing Trustee

The ACI Foundation announced the election of new Trustees and the re-election of an existing Trustee to its Board. Joining Jeffrey Coleman, Scott M. Anderson, Frederick Grubbe, Keith Kesner, David Lange, and Brett McMahon is Michael J. Schneider, elected Chair of Trustees, and Khaled Awad, re-elected as a Trustee. New ACI Vice

President, Matthew R. Sherman, will also join the Board of Trustees as part of his new role.

ACI Honorary Member **Michael J. Schneider** was Senior Vice President and Chief People Officer at Baker Construction in Monroe, OH, USA, and celebrated 46 years with Baker in 2024 before his retirement. He currently resides in Albuquerque, NM, USA, and is President of Michael Schneider Consulting, LLC. He also serves on the Board of Directors for NEU: An ACI Center of Excellence for Carbon Neutral Concrete and PRO: An ACI Center of Excellence for Advancing Productivity.

Schneider has been a member of ACI since 1981, served as President from 2016 to 2017, and is a member of the *Concrete International* Award Committee and ACI Committees S801, Student Competitions; 132, Responsibility in Concrete Construction; and 134, Concrete Constructability; as well as Joint ACI-ASCC Committee 117, Tolerances. He has also served on the ACI Financial Advisory Committee and is Past President of the American Society of Concrete Contractors (ASCC). Schneider was named a Fellow of ACI in 2006 and an ACI Honorary Member in 2024. He received the 2011 ACI Roger H. Corbetta Concrete Constructor Award and the 2021 ACI Foundation Knowledge to Practice Award.

Schneider has served the ACI Foundation and its councils for over a decade, most recently as past Chair of the ACI Foundation. He is past Chair of the Strategic Development Council (SDC) (now the Concrete Innovation Council [CIC]), a longtime member of the Concrete Research Council (CRC), and has worked with the Scholarship Council on ensuring recurring commitments for the three Baker Fellowships since their inception in 2008. He has also served on the ACI Foundation Development Committee. In that role, he secured over 40,000 USD for the ACI Foundation by using his network with the ACI Greater Miami Valley Chapter to match the ACI Foundation annual appeal 2 years in a row.

Schneider has worked to engage the ACI Board of Direction and ACI Foundation Board of Trustees to help secure 100% Board giving and personally contributes every year to the Foundation. He continues to help build and sustain a culture of philanthropy within the organization through cultivation and stewardship while dedicating time and attention to helping students and researchers in the concrete industry.

ACI Honorary Member **Khaled Awad** is Chair and Founder of Advanced Construction Technology Services (ACTS), a concrete technology, materials testing, and geotechnical consulting firm operating in India, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Kuwait, Oman, Lebanon, Mozambique, Rwanda, Kenya, and several other countries in the Middle East and Africa. He is Past President of ACI for 2017 to 2018. He received the ACI Henry L. Kennedy Award



Schneider



Awad



Sherman

in 2007 and became an ACI Honorary Member in 2025. Awad is an active member of ACI, serving on several committees. He is a founding member of ACI Committee 130, Sustainability of Concrete.

Awad worked in the real estate and construction industries for more than 35 years. He was the Founder and CEO of various construction and real estate companies, dealing with the supply chain and information technology side of the industry, as well as the development of large-scale projects. Awad was also a Board member of the International Accreditation Service (IAS) from 2020 to 2023. He was Founding Director of Property Development at the Masdar Initiative, overseeing the development of emission-free Masdar City, a development aiming to become carbon-neutral.

Awad received his BE in civil engineering from the American University, Beirut, Lebanon, and his MA in business administration from the Lebanese University, Beirut. He is also a member of the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) and ASTM International and a Fellow of The Institute of Concrete Technology (ICT).

Matthew R. Sherman, FACI, is Senior Principal with Simpson Gumpertz & Heger (SGH) and has more than 25 years of experience in consulting and heavy construction throughout the United States. At SGH, he supports company-wide materials and construction-related projects. His work includes evaluating existing structures; assessing and evaluating concrete materials, corrosion, and alkali-silica reaction (ASR); evaluating and repairing specialized structures, such as stadia, ice rinks, and swimming pools; designing and evaluating bonded toppings and overlays; and evaluating and supporting construction operations.

Sherman is a Fellow of ACI and the International Concrete Repair Institute (ICRI). An ACI committee member since 2010, Sherman is Chair of the ACI Membership Committee and a member of the ACI Board of Direction, the Fellows Nomination Committee, and ACI Committees 201, Durability of Concrete; 228, Nondestructive Testing of Concrete; and 349, Concrete Nuclear Structures. He also serves on the Executive Committee Task Group on Outlook 2040 and has previously served as Chair of the Membership and Financial

Activities Committee. Sherman is active with ICRI, where he serves on multiple committees and as Chair of the Technical Activities Committee.

Sherman received his BS in civil engineering from Cornell

University, Ithaca, NY, USA, in 1991, and his MS in civil engineering from The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, TX, USA, in 1993. He is a licensed professional engineer in multiple states and two Canadian provinces.

Plan Your Legacy

Have you thought about the advancement of the concrete industry in the years to come? The ACI Foundation programs focus on building the future of the concrete industry and rely on organizations and individuals like you who want to pay it forward and give back to the industry that you helped advance and for which you have a passion.

- A gift to the ACI Foundation is an opportunity to invest in the next generation of leaders, new technical knowledge, and innovation.
- A gift to the ACI Foundation as part of your financial plan, whether through your estate, will, donor-advised fund, cash, stocks, bonds, insurance, or other retirement assets, will carry your technical legacy into

the future of the concrete industry.

It's never too early to plan your legacy. To start the conversation, contact Kari Martin, ACI Foundation Fundraising Manager, at +1.248.848.3757 or kari.martin@acifoundation.org.

Tribute Donations

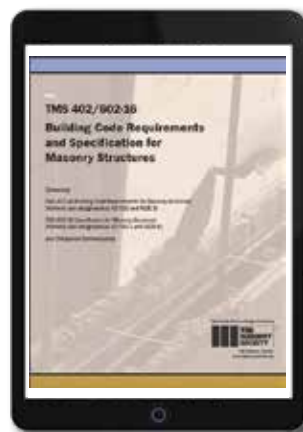
Honor the memory of someone who made a significant impact in your life with a tribute donation to the ACI Foundation. Your gift will preserve their legacy while also making a positive impact on the industry. A tribute donation lays the groundwork for a bright future while honoring the past. Donate online at www.acifoundation.org/giving.

MASONRY BUILDING CODE REQUIREMENTS

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