

IMPACT

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Featured article:
RAMA RAMAKUMAR

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LEAVING A LEGACY

45 years of teaching
at OSU isn't enough
for professor

instruction

research

outreach

ceat news



Stillwater airport wind energy system, 1974

In 1967, the Beatles topped the music charts, and Lyndon B. Johnson was president of the United States.

It was also the year that Rama Ramakumar began his influential career at Oklahoma State University — and 45 years later, he is still going strong. In 1952, Ramakumar started his engineering education at the University of Madras in India, where he completed a bachelor's degree in 1956. The next year, he received his M. Tech degree from the Indian Institute of Technology in Kharagpur. A scholarship from the United States through the Technical Cooperation Mission helped him pursue his doctorate at Cornell University in Ithaca, N.Y.

Ramakumar completed his doctorate at Cornell in 1962, then returned to India to teach in engineering until 1967.

Bill Hughes was the department head for electrical and computer engineering at OSU then, and he made it a point to recruit Ramakumar. Encouragement from a friend who received his master's degree at OSU helped convince Ramakumar to move to Stillwater and begin a career at OSU.

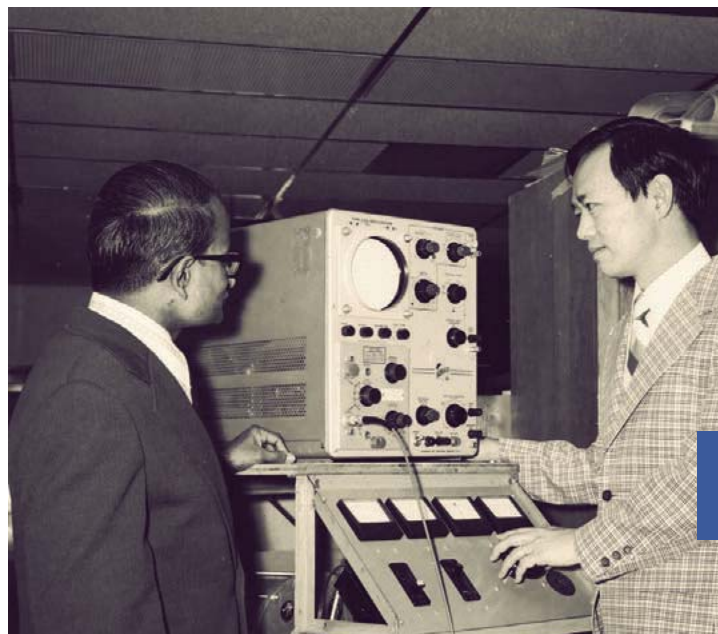
"I have now spent over 60 percent of my life at OSU," says

Ramakumar, a Regents Professor. "Since 1967, energy has been a huge focus. I chose to address my efforts on renewable energy from the time I arrived at OSU."

Ramakumar has become a leading world-renowned expert in renewable energy and can be credited with some of the early models for wind energy systems.

One of his more significant contributions, he says, is being a member of the first group to discuss using variable speed in wind energy as the best method to harness power.

Ramakumar has received a multitude of awards over the years for both his renewable energy research as well as plaudits in instruction. But aside from all the accolades, he says he believes his greatest legacy will be in the scholarships and support he has given to OSU, and the Ramakumar Family Award for Excellence in Renewable Energy, established under the Power and Energy Society of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers, the world's largest professional association dedicated to advancing technological innovation and excellence for the benefit of humanity.



RAMA RAMAKUMAR (left) discusses energy with a graduate student in 1976.

"Again, this is part of a legacy," says Ramakumar. "Students will benefit each year from this and further advance research and development in the renewable energy industry."

Because of Boone Pickens' 2:1 match gift, Ramakumar decided to give a large amount to OSU while still being a professor with no immediate plans for retirement.

"I wanted to see the impact of my gifts," says Ramakumar. "I have been treated well by OSU, so what better way to give back and to promote renewable energy than through future students?"

The Ramakumar Family scholarship is set up for CEAT students interested in renewable energy and studying electrical and computer engineering.

"I hope to gain national attention for potential students interested in this area to come to OSU," he says. "I have also placed a large gift to CEAT for directing the Engineering Energy Lab."

It has been a longtime goal for Ramakumar to leave his mark — not only at OSU but internationally in the field of renewable energy. Ramakumar was honored this spring with an invitation, one of 20 worldwide, from the United Nations Industrial Development Organization to participate in an expert group meeting in Trieste, Italy. The group addressed potentials of renewable energy options for off-grid areas of Africa. This international recognition adds to the long list of significant accomplishments of this acclaimed OSU professor.

His legacy will forever be remembered at OSU. But for now, he has no intention to retire.

"I will continue to teach and do research until I find something better to do," Ramakumar says jokingly. With 45 years here, Ramakumar is making a mark for his devotion to OSU. But his substantial gifts to the college will leave a legacy that far surpasses his tenure. **CEAT**