Menzer Pehlivan, Ph.D., P.E., M.ASCE

Dr. Menzer Pehlivan was 13-years-old, living in the capital city of Ankara, Turkey, when the 1999 Kocaeli earthquake hit her country. Dr. Pehlivan's family survived mostly unscathed, but their country had not. She was not content to process the tragedy through the eyes of a typical young teenager. She wanted answers. She wanted to help. And that's how her civil engineering career began.

Now a practicing geotechnical engineer at CH2M based in the firm's Seattle, Washington office, Dr. Pehlivan obtained her doctorate from the University of Texas at Austin in 2013, and her Master and Bachelor of Science in civil engineering at Middle East Technical University in Turkey.

Specializing in the analysis of seismic site response, liquefaction and other natural hazards, soil-foundation-structure interaction, probabilistic seismic hazard analysis (PSHA) and the seismic design of foundation of bridges, ports, nuclear facilities and other structures, Dr. Pehlivan has worked on projects throughout the U.S., Mexico, Canada and the Middle East.

These projects include actively pioneering research to advance state-of-the-art and state-of-the-practice geotechnical earthquake engineering efforts. Additionally, she is the author of several journal and conference articles focused on geotechnical and geotechnical earth quake engineering. Dr. Pehlivan participated in NGA-EAST research efforts regarding the modeling of the uncertainty in regional soil effects of Eastern-North America, and following the 2015 Nepal and 2017 Mexico Earthquakes, she was one of the appointed members of the Geotechnical Extreme Events Reconnaissance (GEER) team who traveled to Nepal and Mexico to perform post-earthquake reconnaissance. She is an associate member of Seismic Code Updating Task Committee on Ground Motions for the American Society of Engineers (ASCE) Minimum Design Loads for Buildings and Other Structures, which is the most commonly used building code for the design of structures around the U.S.

Beyond her day-to-day work, Dr. Pehlivan has held several active roles in professional organizations, including taking the leading role in the development of the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) Geo-Institute Board-Level Outreach and Engagement Committee in 2015, where she currently serves as the first chair of the committee. She also had a leading role in the formation of the ASCE Geo-Institute National Student Leadership Council (SLC) in 2011, where she was elected as the first vice-chair of the council and later became the chair of the SLC. Dr. Pehlivan is an active member of ASCE Diversity and Inclusion, ASCE Institute Advisory, and ASCE Raise the Bar Committees.

In 2016, Dr. Pehlivan was named one of ASCE's New Faces of Engineering, recognizing her as one of the next generation Civil Engineering leaders. She was also selected by ASCE to attend the Emerging Leaders Alliance Conference in Washington, D.C. and chosen as one of the four featured engineers in the "Dream Big: Engineering Our World", an IMAX movie which aims to inspire kids of diverse backgrounds to follow careers in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM). Following the release of the Dream Big, Dr. Pehlivan has participated in premiere showings, television shows, and engineering events across the U.S. and Canada as an invited speaker to increase public awareness and promote women in engineering and construction. At these events, she discussed how to inspire the next generation of women in the construction industry, and laid the foundation to help redefine the engineering stereotype to a public figure that catches the excitement of the next generation. For her outstanding contributions to promoting awareness of the engineering profession, her dedication to advancing women in engineering, and her inspirational message for a new generation to Dream Big, Dr. Pehlivan was awarded the 2017 ASCE President's Medal, making her the youngest recipient of this prestigious award.

For Dr. Pehlivan, the early desire to improve the communities where we work, live and play fueled her dream, and continues to color her strong interest to create resilient and sustainable transportation facilities and structures, and her passion to articulate the value of the engineering profession to future generations around the world.