



Douglas Whittaker, P.E., S.E., Bridge Technical Manager at Michael Baker International

Douglas Whittaker is a Bridge Technical Manager with Michael Baker International located in Rocky Hill, CT. He has over three decades of experience in design and construction of complex steel and concrete bridges including concrete segmental bridges, long-span steel plate girders, steel trusses, pre-stressed and post-tensioned concrete girders, cable stayed structures, and steel and concrete arches. Mr. Whittaker has experience in performing complex analyses that incorporate construction staging, developing innovative construction methods for projects with difficult site constraints, and providing value engineering and constructability reviews to improve overall project efficiency and reduce risk. He currently provides management and technical leadership in support of bridge design, rehabilitation, and emergency repair projects nationwide. Mr. Whittaker is a certified instructor with the National Highway Institute and leads classes on bridge design and structural stability during construction. He obtained a bachelor's degree in civil engineering from Worcester Polytechnic Institute and a master's degree in structural engineering from the University of Maine. He is also a licensed professional engineer in twelve states and a licensed structural engineer in one state.



2025 SEI-CT Structural Engineering Seminar – Speakers



Matthew Paradis, P.E., CCM, Project Manager at HNTB Corporation

Matt Paradis is a licensed Professional Engineer (CA, CT, NY) and Certified Construction Manager with over 20 years of experience in bridge design, construction, and delivery at HNTB. A graduate of Northwestern University's McCormick School of Engineering, Matt specializes in leading multidisciplinary teams on complex infrastructure projects. Matt currently serves as project integrator for the Susquehanna River Rail Bridge replacement in Maryland and played a key role in the delivery of the WALK Bridge replacement in Norwalk, Connecticut. His expertise includes structural engineering, program and alternative delivery, and design services during construction, with a focus on risk planning and mitigation. He has contributed to high-profile bridge projects across California, New Jersey, New York, and Massachusetts, including connection design for the Golden Gate Bridge suicide deterrent system and oversight of design and construction for the Tappan Zee Bridge replacement. Matt is committed to mentoring emerging engineers and views each project as an opportunity to strengthen the profession and deliver resilient infrastructure.

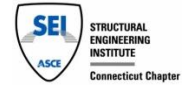


Edward Cofrancesco, P.E., Project Manager at HNTB Corporation

Ed Cofrancesco is a licensed Professional Engineer and graduate of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute with 11 years of experience in the analysis, design and construction of highway, rail and bridge projects in the Northeast. He has been involved in many projects ranging from local culvert replacements to complex and movable bridges. Ed has been with HNTB for five years and currently serves as the construction lead for design services during construction (DSDC) of the WALK Bridge Replacement project in Norwalk, Connecticut. He approaches every project with a focus on interdisciplinary coordination and constructability during design.



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Michael F. Hughes, P.E., S.E., Associate Principal at Simpson Gumpertz & Heger

Mike is an Associate Principal with Simpson Gumpertz & Heger (SGH) and has served as principal in charge, project manager, and project engineer for a diverse range of design, investigation, and rehabilitation projects on all types of structures. He has extensive experience overseeing a range of design, investigation, and rehabilitation projects for all types of structures. Mike specializes in solving structural design challenges for clients across a wide range of industries, including science and technology, manufacturing, health care, education, athletics, and the public sector. This project work includes designing new, purpose-built buildings and developing modifications to reposition existing buildings for new uses.



Greg Holness, P.E., Esq., Managing Director at FTI Consulting

Greg has more than three decades of experience in construction and construction disputes, having held the titles of Transportation Engineer, Claims Analyst, Project Manager, Project Director, Operations Manager, and General Counsel. Prior to joining FTI Consulting, he worked at the Connecticut DOT, two design-build curtainwall subcontractors, an international engineering company, and several law firms.

Currently he performs forensic analysis of troubled projects and testifies in court and arbitration as an expert witness on construction disputes. Greg's focus is primarily on evaluating schedule delay, acceleration & disruption, and quantifying the resulting financial damages. He also works with owners & contractors, providing strategic advice on planned or on-going projects to avoid and minimize claims & disputes.

Greg enjoys giving lectures on a wide variety of construction topics. Some of his seminars include "How Construction Problems Arise... And How to Avoid Them," "Trips, Traps & Ploys in Construction Scheduling," "How Design Documents Can Prevent or Cause Claims" and "Critical Construction Contract Clauses & the Disputes that Arise from Them."



Moochul Shin, Ph.D., Professor and Chair of Civil & Environmental Engineering at Western New England University

Dr. Shin is currently working as Professor, and the chair of the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering at Western New England University. Before he joined the university, he worked as a postdoctoral researcher at the Rail Transportation and Engineering Center (RailTEC) at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, where he received his MS. ('08) and Ph.D. ('12) in Civil Engineering. Since 2018, he also serves as an institutional lead of the University of Transportation Center- New England Region. His research interests are primarily in the field of structural applications of smart and innovative materials, advanced modeling, earthquake engineering and prestressed concrete structures.



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Jennifer Pixley, P.E., Project Manager & Project Engineer at CHA Consulting, Inc.

Jen Pixley is a Project Manager and Project Engineer at CHA Consulting, Inc. with over 10 years of experience in design and project management on bridge rehabilitation projects. She currently manages and also serves as the technical lead on projects for the Connecticut Department of Transportation's Major Bridge Unit and Consultant Liaison Engineering (CLE) Program. Jen is a licensed Professional Engineer in Connecticut and is currently managing key bridge rehabilitation projects including the Founders Bridge, Bissell Bridge, and Big Foot and Little Foot Bridges. She also led the CHA design team on the recently completed Dexter Coffin Bridge Rehabilitation project. Her expertise spans all phases of project delivery, from bridge inspection and design to construction oversight.



Kevin Zmetra, P.E., Ph.D., Senior Bridge Engineer at CHA Consulting, Inc.

Kevin Zmetra is a Senior Bridge Engineer at CHA Consulting, Inc. He has more than a decade of experience in structural and bridge engineering research, focusing on advanced engineering materials, structural design, and rehabilitation. He has hands-on experience with Ultra High-Performance Concrete (UHPC), structural engineering and rehabilitation, and other advanced structural materials. Kevin's technical expertise includes designing, conducting, and modeling various types of large-scale experiments related to bridge infrastructure, applications of advanced materials, high-fidelity multi-platform finite element modeling, and forensic investigations.



Howard Epstein, Ph.D., P.E., F.ASCE, Emeritus professor of Civil and Environmental Engineering at University of Connecticut

Howard Epstein is an Emeritus professor of the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering at the University of Connecticut, Storrs, retiring from teaching after his 50th year! He received a BSCE from The Cooper Union, New York and both M.S. and Ph.D. degrees in Applied Mechanics from Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois. After his Ph.D. he was a research engineer at IIT Research Institute in Chicago.

He then went into academia at the University of Minnesota where, during several summers, he worked at Brown Minneapolis Tank on all sorts of containment structures including scalloped thickener tanks, smokestacks and floating roofs. His work on floating roof tanks is still cited to this day, getting inquiries about it from all over the world. While at the University of Minnesota, he was asked to help find the cause of the collapse of a 1300-foot transmission tower that killed seven workers. Since then, he has been involved with the forensic investigation of many structural failures.

After the collapse of the Hartford Civic Center roof in 1978, he was appointed to the (Hartford) Mayor's Academic Task Force. He co-authored a paper on the collapse which is cited in many textbooks on structural failures. During the course of this investigation, he came across the failure of one of the connections in a previously unknown mode of failure (block shear of structural tension members). His subsequent research in this area led to the American Institute of Steel Construction (AISC) incorporating appropriate changes in their design code. This mode of failure is now included in all structural steel design textbooks.

Howard is a Registered Professional (Structural) Engineer who has considerable industrial and design experience. He received recognition for several innovative structural designs - in particular, three projects received "Engineering Excellence Awards" from the Connecticut Society of Professional Engineers. Many of his (over 100) publications involve practical applications of structural engineering.

He has also been active in many engineering societies, was on several national committees of ASCE, and he was President of CSCE. In 2007 he was the recipient of CSCE's Benjamin Wright Award, the highest honor that can be bestowed upon a member of the civil engineering community. In 2010 he was elected to membership in the Connecticut Academy of Science and Engineering.

In retirement, Howard stays active with occasional lectures, some consulting, piano playing at senior housing facilities, and community theater performances as a singer/actor, having recently appeared in his 40th theatrical production. He was a ballroom dancer, but now stays active with almost daily dog park visits with StarShine, his rescued American Foxhound.