

- RAMESH C. KUMAR '81 -

RAMESH C. KUMAR was born in India, where he earned his bachelor's degree with honors in chemistry from Panjab University in 1973. In 1978 he completed his first doctoral degree in inorganic chemistry, also from Panjab University. Kumar then moved to Moscow, Idaho to complete a second doctoral degree in chemistry from the University of Idaho, which he completed in 1981.

After serving in a faculty role at Baldwin-Wallace College in Ohio from 1981 to 1987, he started working for 3M. As an inventor, Kumar holds more than 60 U.S. patents including the adhesive/release materials in Post-it Notes and a variety of Scotch Tapes. He has also published 27 journal articles.

Kumar's initial work was to develop hard resins, a key component of data storage, for magnetic recording media. Twelve separate formulations were developed and patented providing significant advancement in media storage technology at the time.

As a senior research chemist from 1987 to 1989, Kumar developed fundamental technology of combining two dissimilar materials such as silicone and acrylates into a block copolymer. These discoveries became the foundation for several 3M products and helped 3M eliminate over 60 million pounds of solvent usage, thus contributing to incredibly significant impact on 3M environmental and sustainability metrics.

As a senior division scientist from 1999 to 2010, he focused on eliminating the use of organic solvents and removing the need for water as a solvent. These included his aqueous release coatings that eliminated the use of organic solvents, an extrudable 100% solids heat-cured coating, and a 100% solids UV-curable release materials. This work minimized the environmental impacts during their production and use.

In 2009 Kumar was admitted to the 3M Carlton Society, 3M's highest honor.

From 2010 to his retirement in 2019, Kumar was appointed to 3M's highest technical position of corporate scientist—one of 30 scientists out of 8,500 research and development staff.

Kumar was awarded several honors from 3M during his tenure including the Pollution Prevention Pays Green Step Award, the 3M Circle of Technical Excellence and Innovation Award for his research on the super sticky Post-it Notes and the 3M Golden Step Award, which requires a product developed by the awardee to achieve sales of more than \$10 million in the year it was launched. Throughout his career, Kumar's efforts allowed 3M to establish many of their home and office products as "Green Products."

In 2015, Kumar was selected as a national American Chemical Society Fellow. He was also awarded the University of Idaho Alumni Association Silver and Gold award in 2019 for his career accomplishments. In 2021, he was a co-chair of the Minneapolis American Chemical Society meeting held in Minneapolis, Minnesota. He continues to be a guest speaker to 3M internationally and to groups outside of 3M discussing the industrial silicone and silicone acrylate chemistry and more.

Kumar is married to Kanta Sethi Kumar, who earned a doctorate in organic chemistry from the Indian Institute of Technology, New Delhi. The Kumars have a daughter, Monica, and son, Nishant, and three grandchildren. They reside in Woodbury, Minnesota where he continues his commitment to mentor students and underrepresented groups through his involvement in the American Chemical Society and local colleges and universities.