

CV as of July 2023
BRENDA E. F. BECK
Professor/South Asian Specialist/Author/Researcher/Folklorist

Current Position(s):

Adjunct Professor, Department of Anthropology, University of Toronto, Scarborough Campus
President, Sophia Hilton Foundation of Canada
(A federally licensed charitable foundation focused on opening up educational horizons through storytelling)

Higher Education: D.Phil., 1968, Social Anthropology, Oxford University (Oxon.)

B.Litt., 1964, Social Anthropology, Oxford University

B.A. Anthropology, 1962, University of Chicago

Citizenship: Canadian

Contact E-Mails: brenda@sophiahilton.ca, alternate UTSC email (not regularly checked) is:
brenda.beck@utoronto.ca

Formal Academic Positions Held:

1968-1969 Lecturer, Department of Anthropology, University of Chicago

1969-1983 Assistant, Associate and then Full Professor (1979 is the year I think I was promoted to a Full Professorship) University of British Columbia. I resigned that tenured Full Professorship in 1983 to pursue various multimedia communication career opportunities.

1978 (four months) Guest Lecturer, Department of Anthropology, University of Madras, India, (sponsored by the Government of India)

1992 to 2000 Conjoint Professor (non-salaried), Trent University

July 1, 2000 through June 30, 2026 Adjunct Professor (non-salaried), University of Toronto. In July of 2022 the appointment was 'transferred' from downtown to the U of T's Dept. of Anthropology, Scarborough campus.

Recent Public Service:

2000 forward: President, Sophia Hilton Foundation of Canada

2018 forward: Member of the Editorial Board, The Anthem World Epic and Romance Series, Anthem Press, London, UK

2019 forward: Member of the Advisory Board for a new Journal called LEAF, published by the Loyola Eco-Affirmation Forum, Chennai, Tamil Nadu.

2019 forward, Member of the Advisory Board, Kumaraguru College of Liberal Arts and Science, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu.

Selected Awards:

1984 Elected "Foreign Fellow" American Association For The Advancement of Science

1984 Elected "Folklore Fellow," International Network of Folklore Scholars, Helsinki, Finland

1990 Elected "Fellow" of the New York Academy of Sciences

2008 Kongu Natpani Manram Distinguished Service Award (New Jersey) For long term commitment to the documentation of the Annanmar Kathai.

2013 Federation of Tamil Sangams of North America (Toronto-based for 2013 annual event): Award in "Recognition of Outstanding Service to Tamil Literature."

2013 Chelvanayakam Trust Award: For a major contribution to Tamil Studies (sustained work over many years as an anthropologist, specializing in Tamilnadu).

2014 The Tamil Literary Garden (Toronto): Special Recognition Award, given by the Tamil Literary Garden for the pioneering work: The Legend of Ponnivala.

2015 The Kongunatu Association of Canada, and the Kongunatu Association of the USA, two shawls presented in recognition of my lifetime of research work dedicated to Kongunatu.

2015 Award recognizing my delivery of the Swamikannu Endowment Lecture, Dept. of English, Loyola College, Chennai.

2015 Tamil Chair Inc., in association with The Tamil Literary Garden, presented me with a shawl in honour of my work in promoting the power and beauty of Tamil oral literature

2016 Dancing Damsels Award of "DD Women Achiever 2016 (Advancement of Literature)," March 5, Toronto.

2016 Chief Guest (& short speech) an honor bestowed by Tamilnadu Cultural Society of Canada (Toronto).

- 2016 Tamil Literary Garden, Toronto, Special Recognition award “In Honour of All Teachers of the World.”
- 2016 Plaque recognizing “Continuous Service to the Tamil Language,” from Federation of Tamil Sangams of North America and the New Jersey Tamil Sangam, (at the annual conference held in Trenton, New Jersey)
- 2016 Plaque of Recognition, Malaysia Namakkal Welfare Associations, Slim River Branch, Slim River, Malaysia.
- 2016 Certificate of Appreciation for Keynote Presentation delivered at the Third International Conference on Research in Tamil Education, Sultan Idris Education University, Malaysia.
- 2017 Certificate of Appreciation awarded by the Principal and Vice-Principal of the Milliken Mills Public School, Toronto for contributions to the development of a multicultural school program there.
- 2017 Award of Excellence, A Plaque honoring my work in developing cross-cultural story telling in Canadian schools, from Educators For Tamil and the Student Success Program of the York Region District School Board, at an event held at the Pierre Elliott Trudeau High School in Markham Ontario. The Markham Tamil Organization and the Association of Sri Lankan Graduates of Canada were also award supporters.
- 2017 GIAN Lectureship award, courtesy of the Government of India. I delivered 21 lectures under this program, 17 in Delhi and four more in Bangalore, during November of 2017 as a special GIAN invitee.
- 2018 (November) Tamil Mirror, Toronto, Lifetime Achievement Award in Tamil Studies for Outstanding Contributions to Tamil Studies and the Tamil community.
- 2019 (January) Service Excellence award from the Canadian Tamil Congress, recognizing demonstrated compassion, dedication and support for community building efforts, and having made a significant contribution to Tamils at large.
- 2019 (April) Awarded life-long (free) membership in the Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), USA.
- 2019 (September) Lifetime achievement award bestowed by the Erode Tamilanban Vaasagar Peravai Society of America and the Oruthuli Kavidhai Group of Puducherry, Tamilnadu for dedication to the study of Tamil Society and for Arts and Science work more generally (being a rough translation of the original Tamil text of the award).
- 2020 (January) Not exactly an “award” but formally garlanded and pronounced “Queen of the Cattle Pen” during a prominent cattle farmer’s ritual conducted in Kongu Nadu, South India (documented with photographs).
- 2022 (April 23) Youth and Parents Association of Markham (YPAM), award (with a plaque) for service and support of YPAM.
- 2022 (July 2) Presented with the Tamilanban 80 Award by Vallinachirakukul (a major North American women’s magazine (published in Tamil) at FETNA (Federation of Tamil Sangams of North America) at their joint New York 2022 gathering.
- 2023 (March 12) Presented a Vaan Avai Award (A Celestial Breeze or Celestial Voice award) by a group based in Germany (supporting a Tamil publication issued from there)

Fellowships: Numerous, including Canada Council grants, National Science Foundation awards and Shastri Indo-Canadian Institute grants (all awarded during my tenure at the University of British Columbia).

Media Interviews: Numerous. Just an example:

May, 2021, An interview entitled “Forerunner Dr. Brenda Beck: A leading Canadian woman who writes about Tamil Nadu,” by Raji Ramachandran, published in Tamil a bi-monthly e-magazine in Tamil called Vallinachchirakukul (வல்லினச் சிறகுகள்) that focuses on women, Vol. 9, No. 1, pp. 7-19, May, 2021, <https://tinyurl.com/5c28h22h>.

Books Translated by Others: My 1972 ethnography *Peasant Society in Konku* was translated into Tamil in 2019 (463 pp.). In January of 2020 this book became widely available in Tamil Nadu bookstores.