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Robert Leonard Mokwa was born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania on December 3, 1961. After graduating from Woodrow Wilson High School in Beckley, West Virginia, Bob attended Virginia Tech where he received a Bachelor of Science Degree in Civil Engineering in 1984. He attended Purdue University from 1984 to 1986, and received a Master of Science Degree in Civil Engineering. He worked as a geotechnical engineer and project manager for CH2M HILL in Boise, Idaho from 1986 to 1996, and is a licensed Professional Engineer in the states of Idaho, Utah, and Montana.

In the fall of 1996, Bob began his doctoral studies in geotechnical engineering at Virginia Tech, serving as a part-time instructor during 1998 and 1999. His dissertation research project was awarded the 1999 Paul E. Torgerson Graduate Student Research Excellence Award at Virginia Tech.

