

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my advisor Dr. Mehdi Ahmadian for his patience and guidance during my time as both an undergraduate and Master's student. His dedication and excitement about research and teaching are very inspiring. I would also like to thank Dr. Donald Leo and Dr. Martin Johnson for serving on my graduate committee.

In developing the drop-tower test facility, I would like to recognize the expertise and advice provided by Timothy Kessinger and Johnny Cox of the Virginia Tech Mechanical Engineering Shop. I would also like to thank Gary Gonzales of Sony Precision Technology. His assistance with setting up the data acquisition system was essential.

I would like to thank Eric Kennedy for donating his time to help me capture important tests with high-speed digital video, and the Impact Biomechanics Laboratory for lending me the high-speed digital video camera.

Jim Poynor, Fernando Goncalves, John Gravatt and Jonathan Sides also made welcome contributions to my work. They each assisted with interpreting and brainstorming ideas about what was actually happening during the impact event.

In conclusion, I would like to thank my parents and brother, Jim, Katy and Shaun Norris, for their love, understanding and continued support. The experiences we have been able to share together will always be fondly remembered, and I am always looking forward to our next family adventure. I would also like to thank my fiancé, Alixanna McLearen, for her encouragement, patience and friendship. Her energy and enthusiasm for life will never cease to amaze and inspire me.