

CELEBRATING RON LINSKY

Ron dreamt of tomorrow, but made things bloom today.

–Norman Eckenrode, Vice-Chair, NWRI Board of Directors

Ron was the most positive, relentlessly optimistic person I have ever known. No matter what was going or how well or poorly it was going, Ron would always find the bright side and put everyone at ease with his humor and grace. I will treasure his friendship, and miss him terribly forever.

– Peter Buffa, former Mayor, Costa Mesa, California

Ron was a person that I contacted when I needed information on a related project. But whenever I went in his office for that purpose, I always returned a few minutes later more energized, with a greater understanding about a specific topic, whatever it may be. He was a walking encyclopedia. And without fail, no sooner would I move 5 feet from the door, that I would hear an inspirational one liner from Ron following me down the hall. How priceless!!! I miss him every day!!

– Menu Leddy, Orange County Water District

I was shocked to hear that Ron Linsky passed away. I got to know Ron a few years ago when I was attended an international conference in the United States, and he warmly invited me to visit NWRI in Orange County. I was very impressed by his hospitality and his great interests in setting up international networks in water research. I was also invited to attend NWRI's Riverbank Filtration Conference and Quantum Leap in Membrane Research workshops held in Hawaii. Ron impressed me with his great enthusiasm in promoting international collaborations on water research and with his careful arrangement for the delegates of the workshop. During the workshop, we decided to organize an international conference on water quality in Tianjin, China, which became one of NWRI's long-term projects. We had been discussing his upcoming visit to China, but I suddenly received a message from him informing me that he could not attend the conference to be held in Tianjin. I could not believe that he had past away just one month before the conference. I wish to commemorate the successful conference held in Tianjin to the memory of Ron Linsky.

– Jun Ma, Harbin Institute of Technology, China

Ron taught me three great techniques for dealing with groups of smart, unwieldy people: 1) Arrange everyone in alphabetical order, 2) Give each person three uninterrupted minutes, and 3) withhold dinner until consensus is reached.

-- Brian J. Brady, General Manager, Rancho California Water District

The passage of more than 20 years has dimmed some of the many pleasant memories that I have of Ron. There are, however, some endearing memories of him that cannot be dimmed by time. The memories I treasure most are of the times we socialized together, especially on those evenings Ron and his wife, Patricia, would invite me and others to their home for dinner. Invariably, dinner would be followed by one or more games of Scrabble. Patty would always serve one of her delicious home-cooked meals, followed by one of her exquisite desserts. I was always amazed by Ron's appetite for these desserts. He really did have the proverbial sweet tooth. I used to be even more amazed by his penchant for constructing outrageous words during the mandatory after-dinner Scrabble game. When challenged, he would insist that the word existed. Of course, on most occasions, it could not be found in the dictionary. To his credit though, he always took his losses at Scrabble quite graciously. It was clear to me, though, that he played Scrabble not to win, but purely to enjoy the game and have fun.

We also had great fun together during our weekend snorkeling trips to the islands of the Dragon's Mouth, off the northwestern tip of Trinidad. Many an exciting night was spent turtle watching and counting leatherback turtle eggs at Matura Bay on Trinidad's east coast. Ron's secret love, however, was for a small remote cove called Arnos Vale on Tobago's Caribbean coast. Whenever time permitted, he and Patty would escape for a couple of days to this idyllic retreat.

He was, indeed, a very special human being who touched the lives of many when he was the CEO of the Institute of Marine Affairs (IMA) in Trinidad & Tobago. He came to the IMA as the leader of a UNDP-funded technical assistance team in the early 1980s. During his 2-year stay at the IMA, he reorganized its management structure and re-focused its strategic direction. Through his intervention, the staff complement, research programs, and supporting infrastructure grew substantially. Staff salaries and overall working conditions also improved markedly. Needless to say, his departure at the end of his assignment in Trinidad saddened many of us.

Those of us, who had the good fortune to work closely with Ron were impressed by his professionalism, integrity, and sound judgment. He was a warm-hearted, unpretentious, and caring person, always full of encouragement and support for those who worked with him.

The foregoing hardly does justice to the tremendous impact this wonderful human being had on the IMA, and on the lives of those who came to know him more intimately. His legacy, however, lives on. My life, certainly, has been richer for knowing him.

Ron's passing was an unexpected shock that deeply saddened me. I had hoped to see him again one day but, alas, that was not to be. Farewell, good friend. May the choirs of angels keep you company forever.

--Doon Ramsaroop, former Deputy Director in charge of research,
Institute of Marine Affairs in Trinidad, and current Managing Director,
Seafood Express Limited

I met Ron Linsky in July 2004 during one of my visits to the Orange County Water District (OCWD). During this first meeting, I became very impressed by Ron's leadership, vision, enthusiasm, and quick intellect. At the time, Don Phipps of OCWD and I were collaborating on an NSF-funded project on the use of dendrimers to recover metal ions from aqueous solutions. I became excited when Don advised me that Ron Linsky would attend my informal seminar on "Water Treatment by Dendrimer Enhanced Filtration" at OCWD in July 2004. Halfway through my presentation, I realized that Ron had already grabbed the basic concept of Dendrimer Enhanced Filtration. I was particularly impressed with Ron's comment that I was essentially proposing to develop "designer molecules" (Ron's own expression) that could be combined with filtration to remove/destroy chemical and biological contaminants from water. Following my presentation, I met with Ron. He subsequently encouraged me and Don to submit an exploratory research proposal to NWRI. He suggested that we explore the use of dendrimer-enhanced filtration to recover metal ions from membrane concentrates. Ron thought that such an exploratory research project would help bring me (especially) into the "real world" of water purification, in addition to providing novel technologies for dealing with membrane concentrates.

One of Ron's great gifts was his ability to bring people of different background together. My wife, Laura, and I felt that we were welcomed members of the NWRI family during the Fall 2004 NWRI Research Advisory Board Meeting in Deerfield, Illinois. Ron also had a unique ability to empower people around him and make every person feel that he or she matters. When I became an NWRI Principal Investigator in Spring 2005, I often called Ron for advice. He was always available, helpful, and empowering. My wife and I will greatly miss his friendship and support. We thank Ron very much for giving us the opportunity to visit China during the recent NWRI-China International Workshop in Tianjin (China) on September 5-8, 2005.

– Mamadou Diallo, California Institute of Technology

My Department is upstairs from Ron's office. You could always tell when Ron was in the building because mirth was in the air. I used to think it was the aroma of popcorn from the lunchroom, but it was actually Ron's bubbling effusiveness I detected. Whenever I was part of an informal gathering where Ron was present ("informal" means there's food), Ron would be a'talking. Ever mindful of his manners, he would pause during the chewing process, but made sure to draw everyone else into the conversation. During one gathering, Ron proved he knew more about chocolate than anyone this side of Willy Wonka. And, of course, when it came to water, he had no peer (although he probably had a berth at the pier). His interests were wide-ranging, as was he. From Chino to China, the people he encountered knew what I know: Ron was a guy you liked being around, even when he wasn't handing out grants. His absence will be felt for a long time.

– Richard Bold, Orange County Water District

When I moved to UCLA to start my academic career in 1989, I'd never before worked with membranes. Ron Linsky was the first person to give me a grant on membrane research. He knew I was a very young Assistant Professor, and it would boost my career to get this research grant. He was also able to negotiate with the university so there'd be no overhead charges, which meant all the grant money went directly to my research. He was so helpful. He took a chance on me, and I'll never forget what that meant for my career.

– Menachem Elimelech, Yale University, Clarke Prize Laureate

I first met Ron in the early 1990s soon after he became Executive Director of the National Water Research Institute (NWRI). At the time, I held the position of Chief, Division of Drinking Water and Environmental Management within the California Department of Health Services (DHS). Ron, who had the unique ability of identifying state-wide problems and the drive to solve them, approached me with the idea of NWRI and DHS co-sponsoring a workshop to develop uniform UV disinfection guidelines for wastewater reclamation in California. I agreed with Ron, and NWRI and DHS formed a working group of professionals with expertise in UV disinfection to develop those guidelines, which were published in an NWRI report in September 1993 entitled, *UV Disinfection Guidelines for Reclamation in California and UV Disinfection Research Needs Identification*.

At the request of the Orange County Water District (OCWD), a Scientific Advisory Panel for the Santa Ana River Water Quality and Health (SARWQH) Study was formed under the auspices of NWRI in 1996. At Ron's request, I served as Chairman of that Panel from 1996 through the summer of 2004. The Panel received Ron's whole-hearted support throughout the duration of the SARWQH Study. For this, I will remain deeply grateful.

At Ron's invitation, I became a member of NWRI's Research Advisory Board (RAB) over 8 years ago and have served on it since. In addition, over the past 10 years, Ron also asked me to serve on various technical committees in his zeal for "creating new sources of water through research and technology." He was always exuberant in carrying out the mission of NWRI, and promoted NWRI nationally and internationally. Finally, Ron was an enthusiastic supporter of each member of the RAB through NWRI newsletters, personal recommendations, and by asking members to serve on numerous blue ribbon panels in furtherance of NWRI's overall mission. We have lost a valued friend and colleague.

-Harvey F. Collins, Consulting Engineer

We shared a date of birth, an appreciation for the global import and value of water, and a passion for pursuing the sustainability of this precious resource. The inspirations shared in that 'brotherhood' will live on.

-- Walter J. Weber, Jr., University of Michigan, Clarke Prize Laureate

I first met Ron some 6 years ago when our consulting firm was beginning work on risk communication issues about recycling groundwater as part of the proposed Orange County Groundwater Replenishment System.

In those days, Ron used to call me “that lady in the white socks.” Despite that, our acquaintance deepened. I was amazed at how many people Ron knew and at his ability to keep all of us straight.

He delighted in bringing those with different points of view about pressing water issues together to meet and talk. He introduced academics to elected officials, citizen activists to engineers, and regulators to scientists. I have watched him play devil’s advocate and argue (convincingly) both sides of a water controversy in 15 minutes.

He had a tremendous sense of humor and didn’t hesitate to use it. His response to someone who asked him about whether he got annoyed at those who wasted water went something like this: I don’t mind if they leave the water running when they brush their teeth, it’s OK if they water the grass, but when they leave the hose running to take a conference call, it’s too much.

I was flattered a few years ago to be invited to one of Ron’s “get-togethers” in Pomona. I took part in a “Nominal Group Technique” workshop over one very long January weekend. The materials NWRI sent out before the workshop described it as an “intensive experience” -- a typical Ron understatement. Essentially, 20-some people with strongly divergent points of view on an issue are locked in a basement room at the Kellogg Center for 36 hours to duke it out in a constructive fashion. Ideas are distilled, egos melted, consensus reached, and the findings are written up in the form of a report. This “magic” happened many times over the years — largely due to Ron’s relentless cheerleading and indefatigable faith in the ability of caring, involved people to come to a reasoned decision. It was an amazing experience.

Most of all, I admired Ron’s passionate energy about that most basic building block of human existence—water. He was never in doubt about his mission in the world. He lived his passion in a way that touched so many of us, and he will be sorely missed. I am happy to have known him.

-- Mary McDaniel, McDaniel Lambert, Inc.

Ron possessed the perfect combination of personal characteristics for an Executive Director: an outstanding ability to create research ideas by listening for water industry needs, boundless energy for the pursuit of funding and participation from potential interested agencies, a wonderful and cheerful personality, and a strong love for his work.

– Bill Mills, former General Manager, Orange County Water District

Any memory of Ron comes back to his smile and the fun he had doing everything. The smile was the same from the first time I met him through the last time I talked to him.

When Ron gave his favorite “value of water” talk at the 2004 Eastern Washington Water Summit, he upstaged the second day’s keynote speaker, U.S. Senator Mike Crapo, by just being Ron. Weeks after the Summit, I ran into people who were still talking about Ron’s enthusiasm and wit, as well as his message, and most didn’t even remember Senator Crapo at all. But the best part was at dinner the night before. I took Ron to Spokane Club, where he fell in love with the club’s special potato dish and tried to talk one of the servers into moving to California to try to stem the tide of Californian’s moving to Washington. That was a twist I hadn’t heard before. And I know he remembered the potatoes more than the conference.

Ron was a friend and mentor. I’m amazed at how often I think of little things he told me and how much fun we had every time I talked to him.

– Craig Riley, Washington State Department of Health

Ron Linsky was a constant source of encouragement. His world view was always, "How can we do things better?" His talent as great facilitator of research was based on enthusiasm for the possibilities of new ideas, disdain for the blind acceptance of convention, faith in the ability of all people to achieve more than they thought themselves, and a conviction in the importance of open and honest dialogue - particularly across the boundaries of engineering, science, economics, health, and governance. I first met Ron in 1992 during one of his trips to Australia. Our friendship developed during my 7 years with the Orange County Water District and continued after my return to Australia in 2000. I last saw Ron with his wife, Patricia, in early July 2005 during a brief stop in Southern California. We talked of travel, families, teaching, and - as always - the future. Ron and Patricia are optimists, who look for and cultivate what is good in people and places. The water community (and its people) are poorer now that Ron is gone ... but much richer for Ron and Patricia's involvement.

– Greg Leslie, University of New South Wales, Australia

Ron had a special way of connecting with people – whether a Research Advisory Board member or the door attendant at the hotel. Effective leaders have this ability. I will always remember how Ron would greet me with that sparkle in his eye, that wonderful smile, and exuberance in his voice as he said, “Stanley! How are you?” In the course of the conversation, he would put his arm on my shoulder and say, “Let me tell about this idea I have and how we can work together.” His passion was contagious. Ron truly cared about people and was an expert at developing collaborative relationships. I learned a lot from Ron over the years. A part of Ron will always be with me, and I hope to model some of the behaviors he lived by.

– Stan Ponce, United States Geological Survey

Ron has been a wonderful mentor to me. As a graduate student fellow with the NWRI, I was able to interact with Ron at a few of the Research Advisory Board (RAB) meetings. At these events, he provided the opportunity for me to experience the “real world,” by interacting with water professionals and researchers in a forum unlike most graduate students ever have access too. At these meetings, he was encouraging, yet continued to offer a grounded perspective and advice. I felt like he was my biggest cheerleader academically, professionally, and personally. His warmth and care made interactions with him, the RAB, and NWRI a true pleasure. And these interactions helped me feel the confidence I needed to pursue my current position in academia ... and as well to apply as a Principal Investigator now with NWRI. I will be forever grateful for the opportunities Ron opened to me and for the joy he shared with everyone.

- Sharon Walker, University of California, Riverside

Ron was always smiling, cheerful, and caring. He always wanted to help people get ahead - especially the young people. He made me smile just passing him in the hallway. He will be greatly missed.

- Judy Wooton, Orange County Water District

I am saddened to learn that Ron Linsky has passed away. Ron was a remarkable visionary in the water field. He had a knack for identifying important emerging issues and helped to communicate their significance. Examples include ozonation, membranes, water reuse, and riverbank filtration. Ron was always an optimist and exuded enthusiasm during group discussions. I came to know Ron well in planning for the 1999 and 2003 International Conferences on Riverbank Filtration. These conferences brought together many outstanding folks, both national and international, to discuss the merits of riverbank filtration and how best to implement such systems in the U.S. It was a joy and inspiration to work with Ron.

- Edward J. Bouwer, The Johns Hopkins University

Ron really cared for people. In my case, I have been coping with Prostrate Cancer and Diabetes for the last 5-plus years. There were many times when I had planned to attend a RAB Meeting, only to end up not being able to because of my health. After awhile, I called Ron and told him that I wanted to resign from the RAB so he could get some one to replace me that could attend meetings regularly. His answer was, "No way. Come when you can."

Never in all of this time did I think that I would outlive him. It is very difficult for me to write this and realize that I will not see him at this fall's meeting.

- Leonard Dueker, DCI, Inc.

I remember the phone calls – "Hello, George." With those two words, you knew that Ron had some assignment for you - service on a blue ribbon panel, service on a review committee, or some other project.

I remember the fellowship – Ron's easy going manner as he extracted your best efforts on behalf of NWRI in the service of water, the good fun at the NWRI board meetings, and his genuine concern about and promotion of each of us as individuals.

Finally, I remember Ron's commitment to the concept of *The Value of Water* as he sought to elevate the discussion of water to its rightful place.

We shall all miss Ron – his ability to lead, his knowledge, his humor, and his humanistic outlook on life. He was an exceptional human being.

--George Tchobanoglous, University of California, Davis, Clark Prize
Laureate

In September 2002, I met Ron Linsky for the first time, when we discussed the possibility of NWRI supporting me during my sabbatical to the University of California, Berkeley, for a study on pharmaceutically active substances in the Santa Ana River in Orange County, California. During my sabbatical, I met Ron several times in Orange County at several meetings and conferences. He brought me together with intriguing people and fascinating ideas.

We all gain in our lives from others, but Ron also taught me to look beyond my own field. Ron was a truly remarkable person with an open mind and an open heart. He created an inspiring atmosphere and made me feel at home at the same time. Thank you, Ron!

- Traugott Scheytt, Technical University Berlin (Germany), NWRI
Visiting Scientist 2003-2004

One of my fondest memories is from a couple of years ago. I was having a miserable time that winter shaking a persistent cough. Ron came to see me about something else and told me that he knew just what I needed to get better. He took me over to May Gardens and bought me a bowl of soup that he said would help me heal. The warm soup, hot tea, and Ron's enthusiasm about whatever we needed to talk about (I can't remember the topic, just Ron's kindness) really did help me feel better. I don't know if the soup did the trick, but shortly after that event, I did kick the cough. I will always be grateful for Ron's thoughtfulness and his friendship.

- Mike Wehner, Orange County Water District

I remember Ron as having uncontrolled enthusiasm for water research and making the world a better place to live. Nothing seemed too complicated or too onerous. Give him an idea and he would take off with it.

-- Diana Gale, University of Washington

It was during the summer of 1991 when I first met Ron. I was in my first year at WERF, and Ron was at a similar stage in developing NWRI, then both fledgling research organizations. We introduced ourselves and talked about our respective plans, using all the familiar sales pitches that we had acquired over the past months. But what was to come was the inevitable discussion about who would do what sort of work, and for whom ... and how would we work together? So I asked Ron one of my favorite questions: "What do you want to do?" A big smile emerged and Ron began to describe his philosophy about how he wanted to engage the very best people to address problems, and all else would fall into place. Ron was so animated that I don't think he even felt the 100-degree heat that afternoon. It was then when I understood that Ron was not so much interested in processes or competition, but mostly with the issues, people, and solutions. We had found our common ground.

It has been 14 years since our first meeting, walking along the Potomac and planning for the research we wanted to see completed. Since then, we have had many successes, but mostly I remember what a pleasure it was to work with Ron. And working together was easy, because my relationship with Ron was based upon friendship, respect for his principles, and the way he led NWRI. I will very much miss him, his enthusiasm, and his leadership.

-- Charles I. Noss, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

My memory of Ron is of a man of great strength and support. My primary involvement with him has been dealing with riverbank filtration over the past 5 years. Ron had always been supportive of this treatment process and had encouraged me and many others to move forward with getting the recognition it deserves in the water supply industry. Ron had always treated the issue in a very professional manner and with a common sense approach. To him, riverbank filtration made a great deal of sense. I will greatly miss the opportunity to work with Ron in the future. He held a great deal of insight on many important water resource issues. To me, he was a pleasure to work with, and, I will definitely miss working with him.

– William Gollnitz, Greater Cincinnati Water Works

The thought of Ron Linsky not being here with us on this earth saddens me tremendously, but I hold special thoughts and visions of him at our NWRI seminars. When we would have our "pre-meetings," he would always have a contagious smile and say, "What do you think, Barbs?" I liked that he called me "Barbs." He was the most fun and friendly guy to everyone he met. And I always admired the way he could take charge in a room full of noisy people. He really new his stuff. I've learned from this unique man. Thank you, Ron. I know you're still with us - just in a different way. I will always treasure the wonderful memories. Love forever,

-- Barbara Close, BC Designs

As a Principal Investigator of an NWRI project, I had the distinct pleasure of interacting with Ron. When he heard at a Southern California Salinity Coalition (SCSC) meeting that I was preparing a project proposal on promoting the use of recycled waters for landscape irrigation, Ron got in touch with me immediately and asked if NWRI could provide some support. I quickly accepted his offer, and obtained seed money to initiate this project well before the WaterReuse project was approved for funding. I want you to know that this seed money grant from NWRI was extremely helpful in jump-starting this project. I was impressed with Ron's vision of needing to utilize recycled waters more fully to conserve potable waters, especially in the Los Angeles-San Diego corridor. In my interactions, I found Ron to be very responsive to my inquiries, helpful in publicizing our project through SCSC, and providing valuable local contacts. And, above all, I found Ron to be a gentleman, a supportive colleague, and a good friend. Our project will miss his support and managerial skills. We have lost a great man.

- Kenneth Tanji, University of California Davis

When I met Ron for the first time, I was a Ph.D. fresh out of the University of Illinois. I spoke to Ron about doing some work on riverbank filtration and briefly explained to him what the Europeans were doing with this low cost technology. He listened to me very attentively and said we need to have the first international conference on riverbank filtration. With logistical support from the Louisville Water Company and limited financial support from USEPA, Ron organized this conference. This set the stage for riverbank filtration research in the United States. More than three-dozen large to medium utilities are actively using riverbank filtration for improving their source water quality. The first conference also set the stage to write a book on riverbank filtration. Ron was generous enough to put a lot of financial resources to develop this book and, without a doubt, it is the most referred book on riverbank filtration. The second international conference in Cincinnati addressed regulatory issues in addition to research.

Ron passed away while we were planning the third conference in 2006. Ron was very supportive of implementing riverbank filtration in India, China, Korea, and many other populated countries where it is needed the most. Ron talked about doing this third conference in China. His departure from us was sudden and unexpected. However, we will work hard to implement riverbank filtration in the developing world, and it will be considered as a legacy of Ron's.

He was a friend, mentor, and father figure to me. Besides our professional relationship, both Ron and his wife, Patricia, were very close to my family. They loved my wife, Sasmita, and daughter, Ananya. I really miss him a lot. I vividly remember getting a call from him just two weeks before his passing about financing my trip to Germany to deliver two lectures to Indian scientist in a European Union project.

For the rest of my life, I will miss Ron. He was a source of inspiration all throughout my career.

-- Chittaranjan Ray, University of Hawaii

My first impression of Ron was that of a very enthusiastic, resourceful, and friendly person. For many years, we worked together on projects and new ideas, and I will always remember him with admiration and respect.

Ron and I both became excited over potential new ways to answer environmental challenges. We both loved innovations, and often tapped respective resources and great minds to screen ideas and to shed more light on our “evergreen list” of prospective technologies, potential impacts, and critical success factor. He was so encouraging that I know he inspired many. When I served as the Acting Vice President (and advisor of environmental program) of the American University in Central Asia during the past year and asked for his help, he was always supportive in sharing the needs of protecting natural resources in that less-known and impoverished country. I have no hesitation in saying that among all my professional friends and colleagues, Ron was my best soul mate! He was a true friend.

I wish I could have gone with Ron to Tianjin, China, to attend the advanced oxidation technology conference, as well as the next conference on riverbank filtration. Ron, I really miss you!

Ron’s early departure is a great loss. With my wife, Clara, we would like Ron’s wife, Patricia, to know our genuine feeling about Ron and how much we treasure your friendship! May the peace and comfort from above be with you and your family!

-- Charles Chi-Su Chou, Fulbright Professor at American University--
Central Asia

My late husband, John M. Chaufy, was a former Assistant General Manager at the Orange County Water District. John and I knew Ron and Patricia quite well. Ron was a good friend and a mentor for both John and me. John always appreciated Ron's "take" on a topic, and his sage advice. We all loved animals. John and I enjoyed the various costumes that Ron and Patricia's dog would sport at Halloween. We had such fun with the Linskys at various functions and parties. I'm sure that John and Ron are now having wonderful conversations on a variety of topics! I will miss you, Ron.

-- Valerie Casper Chaufy

Ron was the most creative and innovative leader I have known in the water, science, technology, and health business. He could think across many disciplines and see relationships that others missed. He saw opportunities, took chances, and made decisions that made NWRI an organization with impacts far beyond its size. He made NWRI a step apart from its colleague organizations because he eliminated the "box" rather than just think outside of it. On top of all of his skills and accomplishments, he was a great guy. I will miss him very much.

-- Joseph Cotruvo, Consultant

Ron was a kind and dedicated individual who cherished and loved his creation, NWRI. I was always impressed by his demeanor and his ability to calmly pick through the issues. He was a man with a mission to improve water resources for all. Ron is irreplaceable.

-- Rafael L. Bras, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Clarke Prize Laureate

Ron had an amazing talent for motivating people and a full-throttle enthusiasm for the research enterprise. He also kept everyone smiling. Every couple of weeks, he'd call me to check up on my progress. If I didn't answer the phone, he'd leave a message that always started, "Staaaaannnnllllleeeey, whhhheerrreee arrrrreee youuuuu???"

When NWRI funded our first study of surf zone pollution at Huntington Beach, Ron was interviewed about our project, and he waxed poetic about the emerging importance of the "urban watershed" and the "urban ocean." He told the reporter:

"Curbs and gutters are taking the place of streams. Open channels are the rivers we used to have. Golf courses and green strips are the glades and forests and pastures."

He has a metaphor, as well, for the ocean's vulnerability. "There's a huge broth out there, a bouillabaisse. You add too much salt or too much shrimp, it turns out entirely different.

"If we could take out the biggest unknown—the one called the human—we could probably solve the problem," Linsky says. "But Southern California has 17 million people, and 600,000 more arriving every year."

Someone told me that I had the distinction of being the longest-funded NWRI Principal Investigator. I think it would be better said that I had the singular honor of a long affiliation with a great man--a visionary, a mentor, a leader. I will miss him—his humor, enthusiasm, and intelligence--immensely.

-- Stanley Grant, University of California, Irvine

I remember the first time I met Ron over a decade ago. It was at a horse ranch in Southern California, and we were having a NWRI meeting under a tent canopy. What a wonderful setting that was and what terrific friendship was begun. Ron was, as usual, full of enthusiasm, bubbling over with ideas and seeking even more. What - then and since - impressed me most was his ability to cut through bureaucracy and get things done. This enabled him to make the great many contributions he did in the world of water. I miss Ron very much, but have confidence that the pathways he started will forge ahead and the quality of life of many people will be better for it. This, then, will be Ron's legacy.

-- Gary Westerhoff, Malcolm Pirnie, Inc.

Ron was truly a dedicated and innovative leader in water education, and I think this is what made him an extremely strong Executive Director of NWRI. Clearly, he made a major effort to support the “best and the brightest” students, whether they were in an Orange County grade school or in the graduate school of a prestigious university. Each student received a private lesson from Ron on the importance of water. The strong value Ron placed on water has made many rethink the importance of reuse and improved water management.

Yet, I remember Ron as a man who was intensely driven by many diverse interests. Stamp collecting was one. Since stamps were a major area of commonality, Ron, Kris Lindstrom, and I would always spend some time during meetings discussing our latest finds. Ron was specifically drawn to Australian stamps; Kris collected fish topicals; and my interest was classical US. Ron’s foreign travels to large cities always contained a few visits to philatelic shops, where he would almost always return with good mint Australian sets. Early Australian mint sets were his major turn-on.

Ron also took great pride in his family’s accomplishments. His son’s success in the food industry was one such area for discussion. His wife, Patricia’s, participation at meetings and her importance to the organization was never in doubt and clearly showed the importance he placed on family. He always would take time out of his busy schedule to discuss travel, family, and stamps.

Most of all, Ron was my friend. He promoted my research endeavors and encouraged my participation in water-related programs. Although he was a worthy mentor and I will miss his enthusiastic booming voice, I will miss those little side conversations about stamps, family, and travel the most.

- Roy Spalding, University of Nebraska

Ron will always be with us. I cannot and will not forget the twinkle in his eye, his mischievous smile, his sharp wit, his passion for life, and his tremendous intellect and insight – along with his many significant contributions to the National Water Research Institute, to the world’s research community, and to our water environment.

- David York, Florida Department of Environmental Protection

Ron's response to almost any idea was, "Let's do it... we'll have fun." Most opportunities for projects, partnerships, conferences, etc., were met with this kind of exuberance. In Ron's view of NWRI, and probably of life in general, the purpose and joy lie in finding and doing things that will add to your store of knowledge and experiences. Learning things was fun, experiencing things was fun, going places was fun. "Let's do it... we'll have fun" - I can still hear his voice saying it, and I hope I always will.

-- Bill Blomquist, Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis

It was unbounded, infectious enthusiasm for life and human interactions that made facilitating a certainty when Ron Linsky was faced with an opportunity to make water science and technology more effective.

Ron could sell Harry Ridgeway's arcane molecular calculations to hard-nosed, bottom-line business men on his various boards. He marshaled the NWRI funding as the precursor to larger matching Federal, State, and Municipal resources in generating significant water research directions worldwide for both basic and practical engineering programs. As he liked to say, he could act the flea that directs the elephant.

Ron and his wife, Pat, arranged remarkable events, like our trip to Coogee Beach in Sydney, Australia. We will always remember it as a place where we mastered the intricacies of the buses to Circular Quay and The Rocks wood shops between the meetings. The NWRI Research Advisory Board (RAB) meetings became a much-anticipated event for spouses, as "the ladies of the night" visited remarkable venues and developed strong friendships. The RAB meeting itself became a wonderful opportunity to learn and meet experts with great insight. We all have reminders scattered through our homes of the NWRI-emblazoned gifts that came with the fruit into our hotel rooms. The insights gained in those meetings at meals and scrumptious hors d'oeuvre with colleagues greatly enhanced my research.

Ron could not have accomplished nearly as much had he not been scrupulously well-organized. His garage was as clean and as well organized as some of the surgical operating theaters I've been in. So was the trunk of his Cadillac. Once, I asked about exotic woods from Costa Rica, and Ron gave me a bowl I treasure. Each of his hobbies was well organized. Each tea-service treasure had a place.

Ruffles, Ron's Jack Russell terrier, got his role defined with the noisy can for attention. It was a worry to some NWRI supplicants that a somnifacient presentation would get the can. It was a particular treat to go with the Linskys to their special Chinese restaurant no forks and you do not order. Just as with the course of water science, we lucky few had the opportunity to have our lives changed indelibly by Ron Linsky's life. Thanks, Ron.

- David C. White, University of Tennessee, Clarke Prize Laureate

Ron Linsky was always a friendly and enthusiastic person. Whenever I saw him he always had a kind word and friendly greeting. I remember when I started working for the Municipal Water District of Orange County, I listened to Ron speak at a meeting. After the meeting, I was eager to ask him some questions on water. Ron took me to his office and proceeded to give me a tutorial. Whenever possible, Ron would attend one of our Project Wet in services to do a great presentation; his enthusiasm was contagious. Ron was a wonderful person and teacher and will be missed by everyone who knew him.

-- Magaly Hayes, Municipal Water District of Orange County

I salute Ron as a master at realizing the human potential for addressing scientific issues through collective dialogue. He believed that if you define the problem, bring the right people together, and persevere with sustained collaboration on the issue (with a sense of humor!), any problem could be solved. But, more importantly, he implemented this philosophy and did it well. I am grateful to Ron for inviting me into his playing field and for his efforts and contributions to improving drinking water quality.

-- Stig Regli, United States Environmental Protection Agency

One of my most vivid memories of Ron Linsky was from the early 1990s, when I was recently appointed Executive Director of the City of Los Angeles' Office of Water Reclamation. A call came in from the National Water Research Institute, a hitherto unheard-of organization. The caller was gentle, urbane, intelligent, eloquent, and persuasive. His name was Ron Linsky, and he wanted to engage the City of Los Angeles (through my brand-new Office) in the work of his brand-new Institute. Ron and I had lunch at the New Otani in downtown Los Angeles, and a friendship began, steeped in admiration and deep respect. When the Office of Water Reclamation was eventually dismantled, I offered to resign from the NWRI Research Advisory Board (RAB). Ron would not hear of it, saying, "Once a member of the RAB, always a member." I feel richer for having known Ron and having become a member of his wide circle of friends, and I feel impoverished by his early departure from our circle.

-- Bahman Sheikh, Consultant

I first met Ron Linsky in 1994, when I received the Clarke Prize at the first ever Clarke Prize ceremony. It was a wonderful event for me and my wife, Marylee. Then, NWRI was young, and Ron did not have the great staff that exists now. So, Ron truly was responsible for all aspects of the Prize and its ceremony.

Over the years, I was fortunate to have many interactions with Ron: more Clarke Prize events, Advisory Board meetings, and NWRI conferences. I always felt truly welcomed by Ron and NWRI. Moreover, I soon became impressed with Ron's forward-looking attitude and administrative skill to transform the attitude into a reality. The growth of the size and stature of the Clarke Prize form a perfect example, but only one example. Putting NWRI in the vanguard of technologies for water technology is, perhaps, the most important example.

NWRI and the water field have lost a special leader - but how fortunate we were to have Ron at the helm of NWRI for so many years.

-- Bruce Rittmann, Center for Environmental Biotechnology at Arizona State University, Clarke Prize Laureate

My lasting memory of Ron Linsky is that he understood the value of water, especially the value of water in its rightful place in rivers, streams, and lakes.

-- Tom Fox, King County Department of Natural Resources

We will miss Ron. He filled the room with his presence, strong beliefs about economics and the value of water, and his enthusiasm. Ecology appreciated the books and information he sent, his interest in our issues and the support and facilitation of our planning workshop in Washington State. I am particularly grateful for his hospitality during my visit to California and his patience with my continuous questions.

– Katherine C. Cupps, Washington State Department of Ecology

Ron always looked at things from the positive side. As long as you have the will, understanding, and belief in what you are doing, all problems can be overcome as they are man-made.

-- Harry Seah, Singapore Public Utilities Board

Ron Linsky played an essential role in science and engineering research. It is a role that is frequently under-appreciated by those of us that spend most of our time focused on technical issues. Ron's training was technical (biology/ecology), but he apparently recognized early on that science and engineering depends on the support of politicians, people that are politically influential, and those that wanted to invest in science that has a purpose. Those of us that are directly or tenuously connected to the technical aspects of water resource and uses owe him a lot for his vision and ability to sell that vision.

Ron did have his weaknesses. He was a believer in technology. He could get extraordinarily excited about the most far-out ideas. It was fortunate that he also recognized the importance of peer review. The role he played in the past decade in the area of water reuse illustrated his recognition of the need for interdisciplinary approaches to societal problems and, of course, he focused on water resources and the critical role this scarce resource will play in the 21st century. While excited about technology, he was also a realist. The problems with this scarce resource are as enmeshed in politics and outmoded policies as they are in technical issues. Ron taught many of us to think more broadly, and for that I thank him personally.

-- Richard Bull, MoBull Consulting

I knew Ron for some time. We were not close friends, but I had a lot of respect and admiration for his clear thinking, determination, and energy, which he radiated in everything he did. During one of the meetings we had 2 years ago in Honolulu, Hawaii, he said to me: "We used to live here. The life was good. But in the evenings, we were going to bed at 9 or 10. I just could not stand it. I had to move." This is how I remember Ron: someone that would not settle for an easy life, always looking for new challenges.

-- Mark Wilf, Hydraulics

I first met Ron about 4 years ago. I became well acquainted with him, but perhaps did not have an opportunity to know him as well as many other water professionals. Notwithstanding, I genuinely liked this man. I considered Ron to be one of the great inspirations in our industry. He consistently instilled a sense of pride about our industry and what we do in countless professionals. I always looked forward to coming in contact with Ron. His enthusiasm for water resource studies and better management practices was contagious. I enjoyed discussing water-related matters of all kinds with Ron, ranging from the trivial to the sublime, because he had a powerful knowledge base about so many topics. Until earlier this year, my work prevented me from participating on any technical projects with Ron. In joining the Orange County Water District in April, I considered that one of the more gratifying benefits would be a better opportunity to work with Ron. I was extremely sorry to hear about his passing. His absence will be felt by a host of professionals on a personal level, and will leave a void in our industry that will be difficult to fill.

- David P. Bolin, Orange County Water District

I have only known Ron for the past 6 years; I regret it wasn't longer. I can close my eyes and see his enthusiastic and gracious smile. What a wealth of information on anything water-related he was. I would seek his opinion and counsel on most any water issue de jour and he would certainly have an opinion with verbal documentation. No matter what the subject - desalination, microfiltration, or dredging Newport's back bay - it was always a pleasure to learn from and share with Ron Linsky.

- Garry Brown, Orange County Coastkeeper

ADMIRATION: In science, as we mature and work over the years with our colleagues, we begin to respect and admire their scientific works and scholarship. At some point, we add "service to our profession" to our job descriptions, and we run across those who we admire for their dedication, professionalism, and integrity. Yet, what is rare, is to glimpse into the hearts of our colleagues and to admire them for their joy and love for what they do. Ron allowed us to see that.

For me, I saw this in Ron, by the way he treated and supported young professionals and students, the future was always glistening in his eyes.

-- Joan B. Rose, Michigan State University, Clarke Prize Laureate

Ron was such a wonderful person who was always full of energy and joy. He was an exceptional leader who knew how to bring people together to work effectively towards the solution of important problems. He started and built the National Water Research Institute into one of the most significant water conservation agencies in the country. He is irreplaceable and will be sorely missed by us all.

- Perry McCarty, Stanford University, Clarke Prize Laureate

It was the summer of 1962 that I had the good fortune to cross paths with Ron. I took a high school summer school course between graduating from junior high and attending high school in Huntington Beach, California. Ron was teaching Marine Biology at Westminster High school during the summer. I was anticipating a career as a marine biologist, and my mother was willing to drive me to summer school some 15 miles away and make the two trips a day to give me this opportunity. Taking Ron's class launched my education in marine sciences and started a life-long friendship that provided numerous opportunities to collaborate on projects and share our ideas and enthusiasm for life, travel, stamps, investing, and furthering the concept of the value of water.

During that summer many years ago, Ron and I really hit it off, and we ended up playing a lot of chess and drinking hot chocolate on breaks. After class, we would go on field trips collecting and observing. He taught me the benefits of field notes, which I took in my early years.

Years later in college, I worked as a graduate teaching assistant for the Orange County Department of Education Floating Marine Laboratory program that Ron started and ran for years. Through this program, he nurtured an entire generation of students and teachers, offering them a combined classroom and field program of marine ecology that was a forerunner of other programs throughout the nation. Ron helped me secure a spot in the first graduate classes to spend the summer of 1969 on Catalina Island at the University of Southern California's Marine Laboratory, an experience I will never forget. Our field work, the guest lecturers, and intensive classroom work really help me further my career goals.

Ron and I were also politically active together in fighting water pollution in Orange County. The Congressional Hearing we organized and presented testimony at on diseased fish near the Orange County sewer outfall was a big story in 1969 – front page news in the Los Angeles Times. Ron also served on the Regional Water Quality Control Board, Santa Ana Region, for a number of years, further beginning his life-long mission of protecting water quality and water supply protection.

After Sea Grant stints in Los Angeles and Hawaii, Ron went on to assignments in Trinidad and Sri Lanka.

His life changed when he married Patricia, and the adventures they shared after Hawaii brought so much fun to his life. He loved to travel, create new institutions, bring about change, and interact with people. He was truly a bio-politician.

Throughout our friendship, Ron and I shared our ideas and thoughts. NWRI was the crowning glory for him. He created, molded, and formulated programs and built an institution that, hopefully, will last a long time. Through NWRI, Ron created a legacy of innovation, education, forward-thinking research, providing technical assistance, and bringing together a lot of great minds and energy to accomplish things that needed to be done to improve life on the planet for all living things.

-- Kris Lindstrom, K.P. Lindstrom, Inc.

I will always appreciate and remember the times that Ron took me aside to ask about myself and my family. He always had wonderful advice, showed his appreciation, and had a great sense of humor. He is missed.

After I'd accepted a new job at another water district, Ron came by to say "hi." Since I was new there, most people didn't know Ron and I knew each other. Ron gave me a hug and, as I turned around, I realized a couple of staff members were standing there, waiting for him. Ron winked at me and told them I was his niece. For whatever reason, that broke the ice, and suddenly I found it easier to talk to people at my new job. I'll never forget how much he helped me out. Ron always seemed to know just what to do at the right moment.

-- Janice Kovacevic, Orange County Water District

Ron had the kind of positive outlook and enthusiasm that made things happen. He could quickly recognize whether an idea had merit, and would do all in his power to take a good idea to a practical outcome. Ron was at his best when "networking"- bringing the right groups of people together to test new ideas. The strong research culture on which NWRI prides itself today exists largely as a result of Ron's efforts and accomplishments as Director.

- Gill Geesey, University of Montana

Not only was Ron a jack-of-all-trades, but he was also a master of all trades. Ron was fun to talk with, and he was riveting to academics and non-academics alike. He was the captain of the NWRI ship, meeting everyone at the dock as they boarded – and they all boarded Ron's ship because Ron explained why it was a good idea.

Ron taught at my high school many years ago, so I felt an indelible connection when I saw him later on in life. When NWRI transferred offices into my building, Ron decided one day to have a lunch party every few months for everyone in the building, not only to break the ice, but also to break bread. To this day, even after Ron's passing, that tradition continues with some kind of food event going on.

Even in the last days, Ron was busy at work, business as usual. I miss this great man and, as I write this, I am in tears.

-- Jim Kutzle, Orange County Water District

My friendship with Ron began in 1973 when he was Director of the University of Southern California (USC) Sea Grant Program and I was the new Coordinator for Research at USC. Ron was asked to run the Sea Grant program with virtually no budget, and he was thrown upon his own resources to build research funding. Ron's impressive entrepreneurial skills were being challenged early in his career, and he met that challenge successfully; but it must have been a considerable struggle because he periodically reminded me of it for the next 30 years.

My wife's sharpest memory of Ron was how he and I were xeroxing, collating, and stapling endless pages of a Sea Grant proposal for delivery to Washington, D.C. by a federal deadline in early October 1973. Ron was never one to show any concern, and he was in a good mood that night because he had conscripted two helpers and the Vice President's xerox machine. We got the job finished some time after 10:00 p.m., and Lora and I staggered home while Ron shot off toward the Post Office by LAX. Our first daughter was born within a couple of days after our sojourn with Ron; Katie was 10 weeks premature and weighed only 3 pounds, 12 ounces. Everything associated with that frightening introduction to parenthood during 7 weeks in the Cedar Sinai Hospital's intensive care ward for premature babies stands out vividly in our memories. Lora jokingly blamed the premature delivery on labors with Ron, so he gained an honorary title of "Uncle Ron," a title that would be renewed with deep affection when NWRI gave a graduate fellowship to our second daughter, Sharon.

It was a pleasure years later to find Ron back in Southern California building the National Water Research Institute in 1991 and helping to fulfill the vision of Joan Irvine Smith and Athalie Richardson Irvine Clarke. The precious resource of clean water really was one of Ron's core values, and he seemed genuinely happy to be able to build cooperative research through the Joint Powers Authority with five water supply and sanitation agencies to identify and support research on water supply and water quality. It was second-nature to Ron to approach universities, industry, utilities, and government to build joint venture partnerships in support of water research, and he was brilliant at it.

Ron renewed our friendship during this period, and he came to the Faculty Center at USC for lunch in 1992 to discuss the idea of creating a prize to honor outstanding scientists who were advancing basic and applied research. Based on my ten years of experience as Executive Director of the Tyler Prize for Environmental Achievement, I helped Ron consider strategies for generating nominations, creating selection criteria, appointing a selection committee, organizing an award ceremony, and financing a sizeable prize. I was delighted when Joan Irvine Smith decided to create the Clarke Prize to honor her mother, Athalie Richardson Irvine Clarke.

It has been a pleasure to serve on the Clarke Prize Executive Committee since the founding of the Prize in 1993. I was very happy that Ron asked me to participate as Master of Ceremonies in a number of award ceremonies and to introduce several Clarke Prize Laureates over the years, including Perry McCarty in 1997, Rafael Bras in 1998, Jim Morgan in 1999, and Menachem Elimelech in 2005. I can recall the early award ceremonies and lectures at the Arnold and Mabel Beckman Center on the campus of the

University of California, Irvine; and I was pleased to host the luncheon and the Clark Prize Award Ceremony for Charles O'Melia at USC in 2000. Another special memory is being hosted by Ron, Patricia, and Mrs. Smith at the Oaks Classic on a couple of occasions on the day following the awarding of the Clarke Prize. It was all great fun.

I knew Ron was very sick last winter when Patricia telephoned me on December 10, 2004, for help in locating physicians at the USC Norris Cancer Hospital to help stop Ron's hemorrhaging. Ron was very happy with the good care of the physicians at the Norris Cancer Hospital. He seemed to be getting better, and he sounded very positive about his progress when we met for lunch at the Edmondson Faculty Center at the Health Sciences Campus during the Spring Semester. Even when Ron looked a bit tired at the Clarke Prize ceremony at the St. Regis Monarch Beach Resort on July 7, I didn't suspect that he was so ill. I did not learn that Ron and Patricia had struggled with MDS bone marrow disease for 5 years until after Ron died.

I feel a terrific loss, a deep void, where Ron's kind smile and positive life force touched me. Ron swept Lora and me into his circle of wonderful and creative friends, and it was a magic carpet ride that we will cherish always. I am proud and deeply happy that Ron put his arm around my shoulders several times in recent years and told me that I was a real friend, including this past July. He wouldn't hear of my retiring from the Clarke Prize Executive Committee until we could retire together next summer in 2006. We were both looking forward to that shared conclusion to our careers while we had our picture taken together at the St. Regis before the Clarke Prize dinner. I will cherish looking at that picture as our last happy time together.

With love for Ron and a deep sense of loss,

-- Jerome B. Walker, Associate Provost, University of Southern California
