Over a two-day span in early June of this year, the water industry lost two colleagues, leaders, mentors, and friends. Dr. J. Edward (Ed) Singley passed away on June 7 at Shands Hospital in Gainesville after a stroke, and Marvin Kaden died of a heart attack on June 9 in Shady Hills. Both of these men will be greatly missed by those of us whose lives were made far better by having them as part of it.

Dr. J. Edward Singley

Dr. J. Edward Singley was a rare individual, serving for over 60 years as an inspiring teacher, gifted researcher, and successful consultant. He achieved worldwide recognition for advancing the science and practice of water treatment. In 1967, Dr. Singley joined the faculty of the University of Florida’s environmental engineering department and developed a research program focusing on coagulation and softening chemistry. He was prominent in refining treatment processes that are used to this day in scores of lime softening treatment plants throughout Florida. While scholarly, his research always had practical applications for engineers and operators.

Dr. Singley also contributed significantly to the understanding of corrosion in water pipes, and he was instrumental in developing corrosion control techniques that are widely used by water operators around the world. In the late 1970s, new regulations under the Safe Drinking Water Act required that all water plants in the United States minimize trihalomethanes (THMs) and other chlorinated byproducts. “Doc” responded with research in the chemistry of chlorination and its byproducts, chloramination, and in THM-removal technologies, such as activated carbon and air stripping.

In addition to Dr. Singley’s academic and scientific pursuits, he was a leader in professional associations, such as American Water Works Association (AWWA), National Association of Corrosion Engineers (NACE), and American Chemical Society (ACS). He not only contributed technically, by chairing AWWA’s Coagulation Committee for many years, but also served in many leadership positions, culminating in serving as president of AWWA in 1991-92.

Dr. Singley’s consulting work took him all over the world. In keeping with his practical bent, he spent innumerable days and weeks in water treatment plants evaluating treatment systems and optimizing water quality. In fact, perhaps his most important contribution as a consultant was in the on-site training of engineers and operators on how to get the most out of their facilities.

In the early days of the University of Florida Training, Research, and Education for Environmental Occupations (TREEO) Center, Dr. Singley was one of the first directors because of his close ties to the water industry (through the Florida Water and Pollution Control Operators Association, as well as FSAWWA) and his passion for training water professionals in Florida.

He touched and guided generations of professionals throughout the water industry. Those of us who were privileged to have worked closely with him during our careers can attest to the importance of the knowledge that he has imparted to us. What we value most highly, however, has been his friendship, kindness, and everlasting support.

I want to pass on a personal note from FSAWWA member and former Region XI chair, Jennifer McElroy:

“I met Dr. Singley when he was in his late 70’s and I was working at my first engineering job out of school. It was one of my first “real” projects and I was asked to call in ‘the expert’ for some water quality advice. Of course I was a little intimi-
dated to meet such an authority in our field, but as soon as I laid eyes on Ed, I knew he was more than just that. We quickly bonded over the Florida Gators and our passion for environmental engineering. He instantly became a mentor figure and a friend. I feel so honored that I was the young engineer assigned to meet with him that day and I truly treasure knowing and working with him for more than 10 years. I have heard him called the ‘father of water chemistry,’ and the man who brought together science, engineering, and the environment. Those who knew him would whole heartedly agree that he was a man of wisdom, kindness, and humility, and absolutely a joy to be around.”

Marvin Kaden

As a long-time FSAWWA member and active volunteer, Marvin played a significant role in the growth of the Florida Section over the past 10 years; specifically, the development of the FSAWWA Operators and Maintenance Council, the Operators Scholarship, and the $25 operator membership. These programs, created under Marvin’s leadership, turned FSAWWA’s attention toward the vital role that water treatment plant and system operators play in the protection of safe and reliable drinking water.

Marvin’s passion for education, and the recognition of an untapped source for future employees, led him to facilitate FSAWWA’s relationship with Heritage High School in the City of Palm Bay on the state’s east coast. The school’s Academy of Environmental Water Technology focuses on a level C water operator prelicensure course of study for high school students leading to graduation, including taking and passing the Florida Department of Environmental Protection class C water exam.

In 2011, Marvin was presented with the Allen B. Roberts Jr. Award for providing valuable leadership and service to the drinking water industry. The man the award is named for worked diligently as the section’s executive director.

Marvin retired from Pasco County as utilities water operations manager and was instrumental in developing the majority of its rapidly growing water system. After retirement, Marvin worked as a senior water quality specialist for Gannett Fleming in Tampa, and was responsible for overseeing regulatory compliance, developing pilot tests, providing and performing preliminary and process designs, and assisting with the optimization of water plant start-ups.

With more than 33 years of experience, Marvin was highly skilled in drinking water treatment operations, problem solving, and facility maintenance management. Marvin was a dual-licensed class B water and class C wastewater operator and held an associate of applied science in business management from Nassau Community College in New York.

Marvin was also an active member of the Florida Rural Water Association, Southeast Desalting Association, Florida Water and Pollution Control Operators Association, and Florida Water Environment Association.

He enjoyed raising large dogs, a good laugh, playing a tough game of golf with friends, and wagering at the casinos, regularly coming home with more cash than he took with him.

The following is a personal note from FSAWWA Operators and Maintenance Council chair and close friend, Steve Soltau:

“Marvin was more than a coworker and peer; he was my friend. I first met him 29 years ago when I was hired as an entry-level water plant operator with Pasco County Utilities. Marvin took me under his wing, introduced me to the business of drinking water treatment, and we stayed good friends over the years. Much of Marvin’s passion for success has rubbed off onto me. He had the ability to make you feel good about yourself. Marvin would light up a room with a joke or a ‘Marvinism’ and would always take the time to look you in the eye, smile, and say, ‘How ya doing, man?’

Both of these men were instrumental in the growth of our industry through their leadership, inspiration, and passion. They will surely be missed, but never forgotten.”