

Campaign Success!

St. Olaf College Board of Regents Chair O. Jay Tomson '58 and President David R. Anderson '74 are pleased to announce that the college has met its goal of raising \$33 million for new science and mathematics facilities.

"Alumni, parents, corporations, foundations and other friends of the college have joined together to contribute \$33.1 million to the campaign," notes Anderson.

On the recommendation of faculty and staff committees that have been working on the design and monitoring the construction of the new building, and in recognition of the \$21 million contributed to the campaign by members of the Board of Regents and by the Senior Regents, the new science complex will be called the Regents Hall of Natural and Mathematical Sciences.

"The new building will take St. Olaf's already strong science programs to the highest level."

"The tremendous outpouring of support for the science campaign shows the depth of commitment by alumni, faculty and staff, and friends to the educational needs of our students," says Anderson. "The new building, designed to promote interdisciplinary learning, will take St. Olaf's already strong science programs to the highest level."

The 180,000-square-foot state-of-the-art building will blend disciplinary and interdisciplinary teaching and research, facilitate close student-faculty interaction, and provide technology-rich classrooms and laboratories for the natural sciences. An accompanying 14,000-square-foot renovation of Old Music Hall, to be undertaken during the 2008-09 academic year, will provide new dedicated space for mathematics, statistics and computer sciences. A connecting link between the two buildings that contains another 9,000 square feet of space will support ongoing collaboration between the mathematics and science disciplines.

The Regents Hall for Natural and Mathematical Sciences will be open when fall classes begin on September 3, 2008. A building dedication is planned for October in conjunction with Homecoming and Family Weekend.



PHOTOS BY TOM ROSTER

Farewell: St. Olaf honors its retiring faculty members

The five faculty members who plan to retire this year have served St. Olaf for a combined total of 167 years. They've coached championship athletes, led students on learning expeditions around the world, written books, organized international conferences, and helped bring innovative ideas and research tools to campus. Most importantly, they've touched the lives of thousands of Oles. As the time draws near to bid them farewell, the college honors its retiring faculty members.

By Kari VanDerVeen PHOTOGRAPHED BY BILL KELLEY

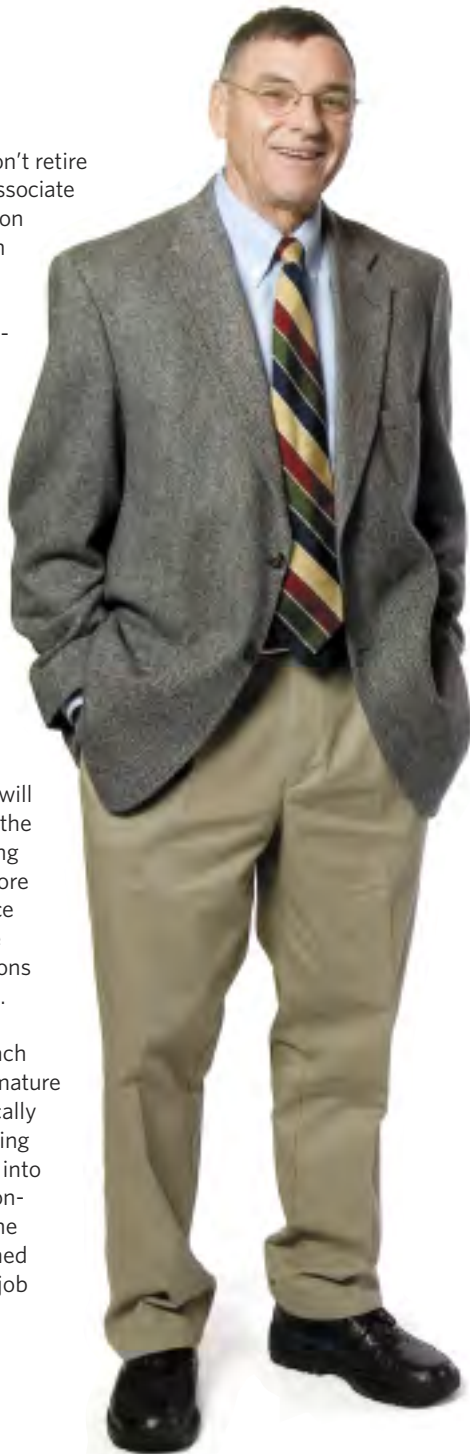
Bill Thornton

Although Bill Thornton won't retire from his position as an associate professor of physical education until 2009, he is retiring from coaching cross country and track and field.

"The passion and enthusiasm for coaching still burns bright and hot, but my energy level to do the physical work of coaching cross country and track and field is simply not there," says Thornton, who is completing his 38th year of coaching track and field and his 25th year of coaching cross country.

Thornton still has a winning spirit, noting that he hopes his coaching career doesn't end until May 24 — because that means St. Olaf will have had athletes qualify for the NCAA Championships. During his tenure he has coached more than 100 Midwest Conference and Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference Champions and nearly 30 All-Americans.

Thornton says the most rewarding part of being a coach has been watching students mature academically, socially, physically and emotionally. It's a gratifying experience to send them out into the world and watch them contribute positively to society, he says. "I have always maintained that I have possibly the best job in the world."

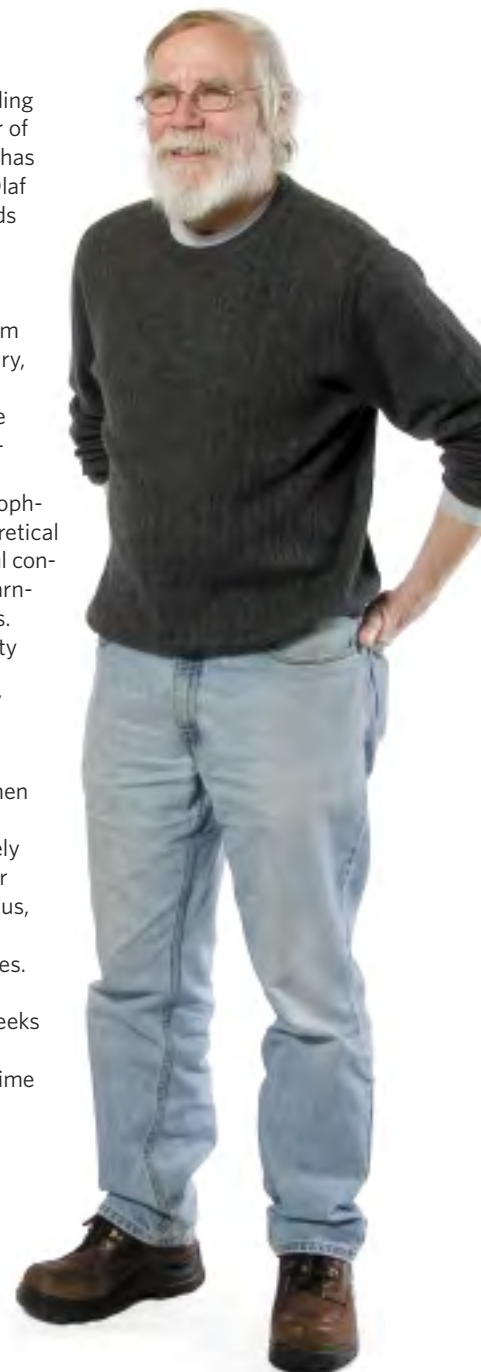


Cliff Corzatt

One of the most rewarding experiences Professor of Mathematics Cliff Corzatt has had while teaching at St. Olaf actually occurred thousands of miles from campus. For the past 10 years, Corzatt has taught the Structure in Higher Mathematics Interim course in Budapest, Hungary, providing students with an opportunity to study in one of the most important centers of mathematics in the world. He has taught the sophomore level course in theoretical mathematics with a cultural context, providing a unique learning experience for students.

"It's been an opportunity to work with students in a much closer environment," Corzatt says. "You get to understand just how nice these young men and women are that we teach."

Retirement will definitely offer a change of pace after 34 years of teaching calculus, linear algebra and abstract algebra to thousands of Oles. While Corzatt has plans to continue teaching a few weeks each year in Budapest, he also plans to spend more time in northern Minnesota, do some traveling and get in more kayaking.



READ MORE AT
stolaf.edu/news

Gary Spessard (not pictured)

During the 35 years he's taught organic chemistry at St. Olaf, Professor of Chemistry Gary Spessard has proven he has an eye for innovation, most recently with green chemistry. "I've always been curious about new things to see if they will really work and help," he says.

The innovations he's brought to campus have also furthered Spessard's other professional goal: ensuring that students have the opportunity to perform research. Working to design green chemistry processes, for example, has introduced students to environmental issues in chemistry with hands-on examples of imaginative scientific thinking.

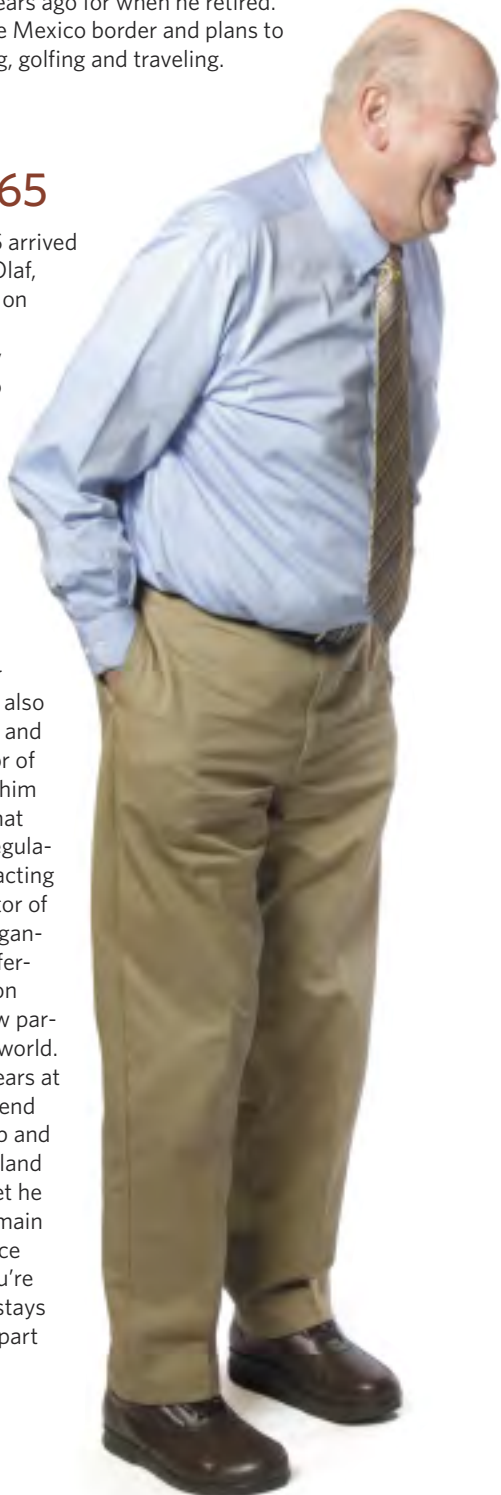
"I'm really going to miss the day-to-day interaction with students," says Spessard, who currently is on sabbatical leave while he finishes a chemistry textbook he's co-authoring with his colleague, Professor of Chemistry Gary Miessler. He is already living in Arizona, where he bought a house eight years ago for when he retired. He's just 20 miles from the Mexico border and plans to spend plenty of time hiking, golfing and traveling.

Gary Wicks '65

When Gary Wicks '65 arrived as a student at St. Olaf, dancing had been allowed on campus for just two years, dorms were segregated by gender, and women had to wear skirts to class. It was a vastly different atmosphere from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where Wicks had spent his freshman year before transferring to St. Olaf to play basketball.

An associate professor of exercise science, Wicks also is an assistant men's track and field coach and the director of compliance, which makes him responsible for ensuring that St. Olaf meets all NCAA regulations. He's also served as acting athletic director and director of campus recreation, and organized two international conferences on sports and religion held at St. Olaf, which drew participants from around the world.

Set to retire after 20 years at St. Olaf, Wicks plans to spend more time in his woodshop and travel, with one trip to England already on the calendar. Yet he knows that he'll always remain connected to St. Olaf. "Once you've been to St. Olaf, you're different," Wicks says. "It stays with you — you're always part of St. Olaf, and it is always part of you."



Eric Nelson

"For 40 years I've explored beautifully written books and exciting ideas with very bright young people — what's not to like?" says Professor of English Eric Nelson who joined the St. Olaf faculty in 1968.

Nelson will retire this year from a career that began with teaching modern British and American literature and expanded into opportunities such as teaching courses in the Great Conversation program and, his most recent interest, film studies. "It's exciting to do something new at the end of your career," Nelson says.

Nelson and his wife, Riki Kölbl Nelson, have led many St. Olaf Study Travel programs as well as the Term in Asia. He's studied several areas of pop culture and wrote a book titled *Mall of America: Reflections of a Virtual Community*. Having that wide range of experiences has been one of the most rewarding aspects of teaching at St. Olaf, Nelson says.

"When I came out of graduate school, I would have never imagined teaching something like detective fiction," he says. His retirement plans include teaching at the Cannon Valley Elder Collegium and becoming more involved in the greater Northfield community.

KARI VANDERVEEN is a communications specialist at St. Olaf College.

"I'm really going to miss the day-to-day interaction with students."

— GARY SPESSARD

Record breaker

BY MICHAEL LUDWIG '03

Nelson Westby's performance at the NCAA Division III Men's Swimming and Diving Championships this past March was outstanding, but the junior Russian studies major from Salem, Oregon, spent little time celebrating.

Just weeks after a trio of top three finishes at the NAAs, including his second straight national title in the 200-yard Individual Medley (IM), Westby met another career milestone in early April when he qualified for the U.S. Olympic Trials with his 1:03.9 swim in the 100-meter Breaststroke at the Ohio State Grand Prix Invitational in Columbus, Ohio.

Westby is one of about 50 swimmers who will qualify in the 100

Breaststroke for the Trials in July in Omaha, Nebraska. The event will determine who the United States will send to the 2008 Summer Olympic Games in Beijing, China.

His success is no surprise to Men's and Women's Swimming Coach Bob Hauck '87, who has watched Westby excel over his three years at St. Olaf. Hauck first saw Westby at St. Olaf's summer swim camp. "We knew he had an enormous amount of talent that hadn't been realized," says Hauck.

Part of Westby's success, Hauck says, is more than just hard work. "He's dedicated to his work in the pool, yes, but he's also equally dedicated to his academic work and being a part of St. Olaf. He's just a great fit."

Westby broke three school records at the NAAs to help St. Olaf to sixth place as a team, which was the Oles' best finish since 1991-92. He won the 200 IM in 1:54.48, finished second in the 100 Breaststroke with a :54.50, and was third in the 200 Breaststroke. His time in the 100 Breaststroke was .01 off the winning time and broke the previous NCAA Division III national record.

A modest Westby was surprised at his record-breaking weekend. "I was confident I could win, but I didn't expect that kind of drop in time," he said of the almost two-second improvement from 2007 in the 200 IM.

Westby, who will train at the University of Minnesota this summer, hopes the record-breaking performance is only a taste of what is to come in his final campaign at St. Olaf. "My goal is to set three national records next year," he says. "I want to see how fast I can go and, mostly, I don't want to lose again."

Westby has seldom lost in his time at St. Olaf. He has won five of the last six MIAC individual titles in his races and was a key component in the Oles' conference championship in 2007. In all, he owns four individual school records and has swam on three school-record relays.



BILL KELLEY

Nelson Westby '09

Goldwater Scholar

Paul Nichol '09 is among the 321 undergraduates nationwide to receive a Barry M. Goldwater scholarship, awarded annually to students



Paul Nichol '08

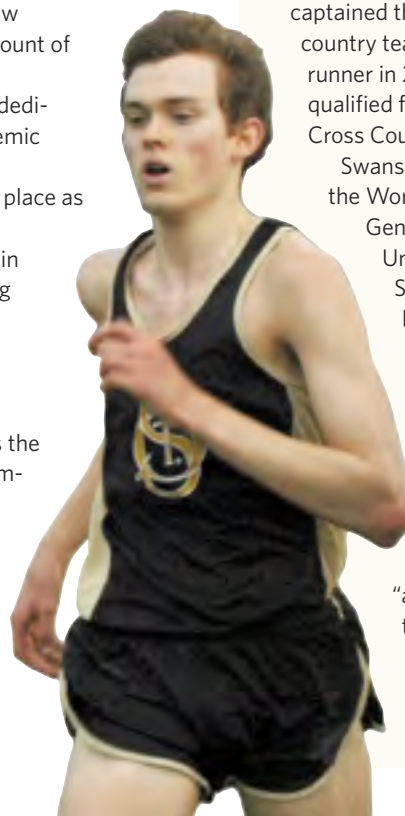
who intend to pursue careers in mathematics, the natural sciences and engineering. A chemistry major, Nichol entered St. Olaf intending to pursue a pre-medical course of study. His Goldwater research proposal involved the use of biophysical methods to study a protein associated with Alzheimer's disease. This year he has focused his efforts on studying physical and biophysical chemistry and plans to earn his Ph.D. in those areas of study. Since 1995, 26 St. Olaf students have received Goldwater scholarships.

Swanson earns NCAA Postgraduate Scholarship

St. Olaf men's cross country and track runner David Swanson '08 received this grant that honors student-athletes who excel academically and athletically. Swanson, a mathematics major with a statistics concentration, was one of 29 male athletes in all of Division I, II and III to receive the scholarship. He twice captained the St. Olaf men's cross country team and was an All-Region runner in 2006 and 2007. Last fall, he qualified for the NCAA Division III Cross Country Championships.

Swanson, who has interned with the World Health Organization in Geneva, Switzerland, and the University of Minnesota's School of Public Health, has been published twice: in *The 12th Symposium on the Natural History of the Bahamas* and in the *International Journal of Mathematics*. He intends to pursue graduate studies at Harvard in biostatistics, "a field that combines quantitative work with medical applications," he says.

David Swanson '08



stolaf.edu/athletics