

FALL 2019

ST. OLAF

M A G A Z I N E



ON THE COVER

Named the most beautiful college campus in Minnesota by *Travel + Leisure* magazine, autumn brings a kaleidoscope of colors to the Hill.

ST. OLAF MAGAZINE

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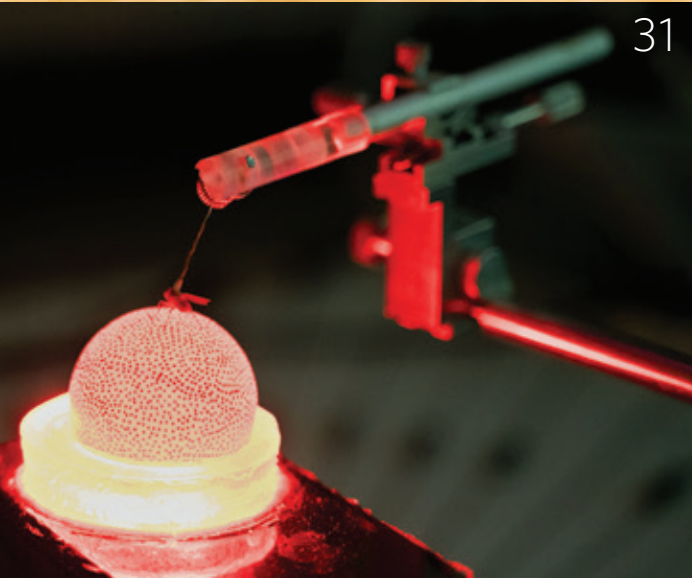
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FROM THE DESK OF
PRESIDENT DAVID R. ANDERSON '74



Greetings, Oles! Welcome to the fall issue of *St. Olaf Magazine*.

This issue focuses on some of the ways St. Olaf prepares students to survive and thrive after graduation.

“Career Cachet” features the Piper Center for Vocation and Career, the hub on campus for the college’s efforts to help students figure out what they’re good at, what they like to do, and how those two things match with the needs of the world. And — once they have figured that out — the Piper Center helps students map a path forward from the college to productive and fulfilling next steps in their lives.

As you’ll see, accomplishing that goal entails some very practical steps. Signature programs and services like Connections, the Quo Vadis Sophomore Retreat, Peer Advisors, and Entrepreneurship engage nearly three quarters of the student body annually. Our alumni, parents, and friends of the college also help guide our students in vocational and career discernment. Their investment in the Piper Center has created myriad internship opportunities for students.

“Calls of the Wild” in this issue illustrates one of the best ways for students to prepare themselves for post-graduate success: engaging in collaborative research with a faculty member. Professor Norman Lee’s team of student researchers are studying the directional hearing capabilities of the fly toward the goal of gaining insight into ways to improve human hearing. Life skills, such as problem solving, working in teams, rebounding from failure, and showing persistence, all emerge from the experience of working in the “Lee Lab.”

Tina Rexing '95 knows about those life skills, which she developed while she “muscle through” St. Olaf. She displayed all of them and more in growing her cookie making business from a stall at the Minneapolis Farmers Market to an appearance on the *Today* show and a contract to sell cookies for U.S. Bank Stadium and beyond.

Traveling is another way to develop important life skills like encountering and appreciating difference, and St. Olaf has long been a leader in creating opportunities for students, faculty, and staff to engage with the world. Enjoy the beautiful pictures from the concert tour to Norway this past summer by the St. Olaf Choir and St. Olaf Orchestra.

Internships, collaborative undergraduate research, travel — these are all recognized to be “high-impact educational practices” because, in researcher George Kuh’s words, “They demand considerable time and effort, facilitate learning outside of the classroom, require meaningful interactions with faculty and students, encourage collaboration with diverse others, and provide frequent and substantive feedback.”

“Oles can. Oles will” is more than a tag line. It’s a declaration of our commitment to graduating students who are confident, capable, prepared to thrive, and eager to serve.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "David R. Anderson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.



UM! YAH! YAH!

Basketball, Italian Style

OLE PLAYERS HEAD TO ITALY FOR A SPECIAL BASKETBALL AND STUDY ABROAD EXPERIENCE.

By Suzy Frisch | PHOTOS BY SUE NELSON

There are numerous advantages to playing basketball at St. Olaf and one disadvantage: it conflicts with the college's study abroad programs. The men's basketball season starts during fall semester, runs through Interim, and concludes in the spring, preventing team members from participating in St. Olaf's traditional International and Off-Campus experiences.

Basketball Coach Dan Kosmoski has created a unique opportunity for his team to travel abroad once during their time on the Hill. Every three years, the men's team has gone to Italy or Greece for a week, where they soak up European history and culture while playing basketball with their Italian or Greek counterparts.

"Travel is an education," says Kosmoski, who has been offering these trips to players and their families for 12 years. "In the course of seven or eight days, they gain a different perspective and learn something that might connect to their coursework or themselves."

This year, the team played two games against Italian semi-pro teams in Tuscany: the Prato Dragons and the San Miniato Etruscans. It was fascinating for point guard

Dominic Bledsoe '21 to play European-style basketball while meeting fellow competitors and bonding with his teammates.

"Going abroad for a week as a team was really great for building chemistry and getting to know each other better," says Bledsoe, who is majoring in mathematics. "Having that shared experience and being able to trust that your teammates have your back is an incredibly important part of any team sport."

Though the trip to Italy was not his first time abroad, Bledsoe appreciated having the chance to travel as a college student and see sites like the Leaning Tower of Pisa and the Trevi Fountain in Rome.

His teammate Noah Beck, a senior guard, agrees, noting that most of his classmates have great stories from their global travels with St. Olaf. "It's tough, because you really can't have that experience. That's why Coach does this — so every class gets one trip to experience a bit of study abroad," says Beck, a biology and economics major.

The team covered a lot of ground. Leaving after the end of the academic year in May, they spent time in Milan, Florence, Cinque

Terre, Lucca, and Rome. They took in many famous places, including the Vatican, the Colosseum, museums, cathedrals, and a Tuscan farm. Kosmoski always hires a tour guide who shares his or her knowledge and detail about the culture and sites.

For Beck, the trip allowed him to learn more about the art he'd studied in his art history class, and it brought to life many places his father, who once lived in Italy, described. "The trip was special because we were able to experience another country and culture in a really immersive way, and it was also a ton of fun to play [basketball] there," Beck adds.

The trip expanded the players' view of the world while whetting their appetites to see more. "I think it's a very important part of their experience at St. Olaf," Kosmoski says. "They come here to get a great education, prepare themselves for careers, and play a game they love. Through the trip, we're able to give them something that makes that experience complete." 🐻

SUZY FRISCH is a freelance Twin Cities writer and regular contributor to *St. Olaf Magazine*.



The Oles, photographed in the village of Monterosso al Mare in northern Italy (L-R): Carter Uphus '22, Nathan Hendler '22, Dominic Bledsoe '21, Noah Beck '20, Travis Fauchald '20, Nate Albers '20, Troy Diggins Jr. '20, Niko Polydorou '22, and Brendan Connolly '21

THE ST. OLAF COLLEGE MEN'S BASKETBALL TEAM embarked on a memorable week-long trip to Italy in late May. The trip mixed basketball with Italian history and culture, as the Oles visited Milan, Florence, Pisa, Rome, and several Mediterranean port cities and towns, and also competed against the semi-pro Prato Dragons and the San Miniato Etruscans. "Meeting the European teams, and rebounding with the youth of Prato during halftime in the Dragons game, were among the best experiences of the trip," said coach Dan Kosmoski.





After the game in Tuscany, the Oles, the Dragons, and the Prato youth teams memorialized their time together with this photo.




CAREER CACHET

D.C. CONNECTIONS

Row one, L-R: Caroline Pippert '19, Hannah Read '20, Zipi Diamond '20, Ling O'Donoghue '21, Abby Wollam '20, Grace Reynders '20. Row two: Thando Kunene '13 (Piper Center), Kristi Kehrwald Adair (Piper Center), Maddie Etienne '20, Lulu Regules Verduzco '21, Hannah Liu '21, Isabel Wallace '20, Kara Anderson '21, Ezra Garcia '19, Jenele Grassle (Piper Center), Leslie Moore '77 (Piper Center). Row three: Kris Estenson (Piper Center), Lauren Peterson '19, Lydia Wehrley '19, Roland Buaben '19, Sumner Pitt '19, Andrea Salas '19, Eleanor Morse '19, Beth Anne Thompson '88 (APR). Row four: Alex Screaton '19, Zach McCarty '21, Sam Bailey '21.

PHOTOGRAPHED OUTSIDE THE U.S. CAPITOL IN MARCH 2019 BY ERIN SCOTT/POLARIS



MORE ST. OLAF STUDENTS THAN EVER ARE TURNING TO THE **PIPER CENTER FOR VOCATION AND CAREER** — ONE OF THE LEADING CENTERS OF ITS KIND — WHERE CAREER COACHES AND PEER ADVISORS, PROGRAMS, AND SERVICES HELP THEM NAVIGATE THE PATH BETWEEN THEIR LIBERAL ARTS EDUCATION AND MEANINGFUL WORK, SERVICE, AND POST-GRADUATE STUDIES.

BY MARLA HILL HOLT '88

THE PIPER CENTER for Vocation and Career — named in 2012 in recognition of the Piper family's gift in memory of H.C. "Bobby" Piper, longtime chair and chief executive officer of the Piper Jaffray Companies — offers a broad array of experiential opportunities to help students connect their liberal arts education to a meaningful career.

"My father believed that each of us is called to use our gifts and talents for the good of the world, and he challenged those around him to discern how their working lives could fulfill that call," says St. Olaf Senior Regent Addison "Tad" Piper.

Today, the generosity of St. Olaf's large network of alumni, parents, and friends continues to sustain the Piper Center's many programs and resources. Students benefit from top-notch guidance in vocational and career discernment throughout their time on the Hill, and Oles at every stage of their life, from prospective students to first-year students to graduating seniors to alumni of any age, can use the center's services.

"The Piper Center supports students in identifying their values, interests, gifts, and skills to enable them to take a vocational journey and find meaningful work, service, or post-graduate study," says Director Leslie Moore '77. A newly launched program, led by Associate Director of Alumni Career Services Jenele Grassle, offers the same coaching and services to alumni. While those participating in the program tend to be alumni within the first 10 years of graduation, coaching is available for alumni of all ages. The program is part of a collaborative effort between the Piper Center and the Office of Alumni and Parent Relations to offer comprehensive career services to alumni.

Because students will go on to work in ways that we can't yet fathom, and in an employment environment that requires them to be nimble and open to change, the Piper Center isn't just focused on helping students find jobs. The inclusion of the word *vocation* in the center's title is intentional. It comes from the Latin word *vocare*, or "to call," and points toward the center's mission of considering life after college as a holistic journey that goes beyond a first job.

"The concept of vocation is important to Lutheran theology and education," Moore says. "It's a powerful way of listening to the world around you, to the opportunities in your path, and to your neighbors and community so that you can find your place and match your gifts to the world's needs."

Moore says that students are understandably focused on determining the next step, such as "What classes should I register for? What should I major in? Should I study abroad? What fellowship or internship should I apply for?"

“We have a very engaged body of alumni, parents, and friends who help guide our students in vocational and career discernment.”

— LESLIE MOORE '77

“Students are focused on the now, which is fantastic because that’s where they need to be,” she says. “We help them understand that there’ll be a whole series of next steps going forward, and that decisions they make now aren’t shutting off all future possibilities. They can major in philosophy and still go into nursing later, for example. It’s about contextualizing their decisions and helping them articulate a liberal arts education.”

The Piper Center’s strength is in meeting students where they are and then ascertaining how the next step may fit into an overall journey. The center provides support in the form of Class Year Guides that help students engage in specific activities during each year of college, from choosing a major to pursuing on-campus and summer work to meeting with a career coach to finding an internship, fellowship, or research opportunity. Students also can get help with concrete tasks — like writing a résumé or creating a LinkedIn profile — and attend networking events with alumni in law and policy, business, health, social justice, the arts, STEM, and entrepreneurship.

“Our aim is to connect students with the people who, or opportunities that, would be most meaningful for them,” Moore says.

Many of the resources the Piper Center offers, as well as its success in engaging nearly three-quarters of the student body annually in using its services, are made possible by generous financial backing from supporters of the college.

“We operate from a position of gratitude for the tremendous support we receive in funding our programming,” Moore says. “We also have a very engaged body of alumni, parents, and friends who help guide our students in vocational and career discernment. The depth and strength of these connections are outstanding, which enables us to provide a lot of individual support and coaching.”

For a better understanding of the Piper Center’s impact, we’ve highlighted four of the center’s signature programs and services: Quo Vadis Sophomore Retreat, Connections, Peer Advisors, and Entrepreneurship.



THE PIPER CENTER TEAM

Row one, L-R: Jenele Grassle, Leslie Moore '77, Thando Kunene '13, Paul Edwards. Row two: Marietta Ruppe, Kristi Kehrwald-Adair, Kris Estenson, Paul Kim, Kirsten Cahoon '98. Row three: Katie Hughes, Nate Jacobi, Bryan Shealer, Margaret Bransford

PHOTOGRAPHED IN TOMSON HALL BY MATT CLARK



“At Quo Vadis, I realized the influence that friends and peer competition have in my decision-making process.”

— BRENDAN WEED '21

PHOTOGRAPHED ON THE ST. OLAF CAMPUS BY MATT CLARK

SPOTLIGHT | QUO VADIS SOPHOMORE RETREAT

THE SOPHOMORE YEAR OF COLLEGE can be a tough one for many students. They're no longer transitioning to college as first-year students, and they haven't yet delved into upper level coursework, mentored research, internships, and off-campus study. Some second-year students struggle with what's known as the “sophomore slump,” or a decline in academic performance, and most are laser focused on the next step of choosing a major.

To help sophomores navigate the murky waters of that second year, St. Olaf developed the annual Quo Vadis — Latin for “Where are you going?” — Retreat in 2011 as a 24-hour, off-campus experience at Camp Ihduhapi in Loretto, Minnesota. The 85 or so students who attend each year interact with upper-class students, faculty and staff members, and young alumni who share their vocational journeys and offer ideas for living an engaged and purposeful life.

“The second year is so important for making decisions about your major field of study, for starting to identify a career path, and for defining how you're going to make the best use of your time at St. Olaf,” says Nate Jacobi, associate director of career development, data, and operations at the Piper Center. “This event is just for sophomores. It focuses on vocational discernment and asks the foundational questions of ‘Who am I?’ ‘Where am I going?’ ‘What's important to me?’ and ‘How do I get where I want to be?’ ”

The retreat helps students think along those lines through discussion and reflection. St. Olaf College Pastor Matthew Marohl opens the event by speaking on vocational discernment — the process of discovering how your skills and interests meet the needs of the world, which is often a new concept to sophomores. Juniors and seniors — mostly past Quo Vadis attendees — lead small group discussions, faculty and staff members share “crossroad” events that altered or shaped their lives, and young alumni provide insight into their career paths, sharing both their stumbles and their successes.

“The students map out their interests, experiences, and influences, and then reflect on where those are leading them,” Jacobi says. “We talk about taking ownership of your own definition of success and not one that's been projected onto you.”

The Quo Vadis Retreat also serves as an introduction to the Piper Center's other programs, as well as additional campus resources students can take advantage of as they begin to explore and develop their paths through college and beyond.

“Quo Vadis is a mix of discernment, leadership and personal development, social connections, and networking,” Jacobi says. “It's about a space for sophomores to step away and reflect on where they want to go.”

REFLECTION

Brendan Weed '21 · Eden Prairie, Minnesota
Psychology major, Neuroscience concentration

Brendan Weed initially thought the Quo Vadis Sophomore Retreat sounded kind of corny. “I thought it would be a lot of the ‘here is your major; here are your job options,’ sort of thing,” he says. But an older friend and past attendee talked him in to signing up, and he found the retreat “so much more meaningful than basic career exploration.”

Heading into the retreat, Weed was feeling a lot of peer pressure to attend medical school. He'd always been interested in the idea of clinical psychology, but “I was worried about medical school,” he says, “and feeling some indirect competition with others about who was going to attend the most prestigious school. At Quo Vadis, I learned to realize the influence of friends and peer competition in my decision-making process.”

Weed says talking in small groups and having the opportunity to relax and reflect at the retreat helped him to “collect his thoughts” and learn to let his interests, not those of others, lead him where he needed to be. He now plans to attend graduate school to become a neuropsychologist, working with those with epilepsy, Alzheimer's, and other forms of brain-related diseases. This summer, he's interning at HealthPartners Neuroscience Center in St. Paul, Minnesota, conducting cognitive assessments with elderly patients. He found the internship after learning at Quo Vadis about the Piper Center's many tools and resources that help students shape their futures.

“I'd recommend the retreat to all sophomores,” Weed says. “It gave me the ability to think about what I want out of life, including my career, and my personal, spiritual, and social goals. It was in the perfect outdoor environment and was very refreshing.”

THE CONNECTIONS PROGRAM, WHICH connects sophomores, juniors, and seniors with alumni, parents, and friends of the college in various U.S. cities, has two main goals: give students an opportunity to explore a variety of career possibilities and introduce them to a particular city or region.

“Connections students build a network of support while getting a firsthand look at Oles who are using their liberal arts education to pursue meaningful employment across many different industries,” says Kristine Estenson, associate director of alumni engagement at the Piper Center, who has led more than 650 students on 27 Connections trips since the program began in 2011. “Students also have a chance to envision themselves working and living in what might be a new city for them.”

St. Olaf offers four to five Connections trips every year during fall break, Interim, and spring break. Groups of 10 to 35 students attend each one, depending on the program, in cities like New York, Denver, Boston, Chicago, Madison, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Seattle, Portland, Washington, D.C., and the Twin Cities. Each program is focused on a handful of industries, running the gamut from finance, journalism, and technology to the performing arts, social impact, health care, and government. The cost to students is \$300 to \$350 per trip, and scholarships are available to those with demonstrated need.

Connections trips run from Sunday morning to Tuesday evening, beginning with small groups of two or three students exploring a city with a young alum.

“This exploration has been a valuable piece of the program,” Estenson says. “The students know the alum’s neighborhood and have to figure out public transportation to get there. They see where alums live, learn about the search for housing, and ask all sorts of questions about neighborhoods, transportation, social life, et cetera. It’s a good reality check.”

Monday and Tuesday are filled with site visits to companies and organizations for roundtable discussions with alums and their colleagues. Again, the students divide into small groups according to the industry they’re most interested in. Evenings include larger alumni and parent gatherings for networking and socializing.

Estenson notes that the Connections Program wouldn’t be as successful as it is without the engagement of alumni. “My job is so enjoyable because of the support of Oles who are eager to meet with students,” she says. “Connections only works when you have engaged alumni you can rely on, and that’s something St. Olaf is blessed to have.”



FREER/C NEEMA/POLARIS



SAN FRANCISCO CONNECTIONS

Front row, L-R: Khanh Quang Ngo '21, Anderson Chen '20, Arbind Shrestha '19, Cuong Quoc Nguyen '19, Thong Hein Vo '21, William Cheek '19, Mikhail Lysiuk '20, Rustam Kosherbay '19, Danica Meier '20, Nancy Rutoh '20, Panha Son '21. Back row: Stacey Longwich (Piper Center), Kris Estenson (Piper Center), Nikesh Yadav '19, Bidit Sharma '19, Alexander Currey '19, Rob Berger '21

PHOTOGRAPHED AT THE SAN FRANCISCO FERRY BUILDING
IN FEBRUARY 2019 BY FRÉDÉRIC NEEMA/POLARIS

REFLECTION

Ramsey Walker '14 | Program Manager, Newman Center for the Performing Arts, University of Denver

Ramsey Walker's career path has benefited from a bit of serendipity. Nervous about his prospects after graduation, he applied "on a whim" for the Denver Connections trip — focused on health care, environment and sustainability, and marketing — during spring break of his senior year. About to hold a B.A. degree in music, he was curious about corporate marketing opportunities versus working in nonprofit arts administration. He also was mildly interested in the idea of moving to Colorado, and Connections let him explore Denver as a potential residence. While there, Walker met arts administrator Sarah Johnson Whitnah '08 at an alumni picnic at Red Rocks Amphitheatre, a connection that would come in handy about a year later.

"Connections was great at forcing me to think critically about what I actually wanted to do," Walker says. Visits to various companies helped him discern differences between working for large corporate marketing firms versus smaller, niche organizations. "It was interesting to learn about the kind of work that was open to me," Walker says.

After graduation, Walker worked in tour marketing and logistics for the St. Olaf Band and the St. Olaf Orchestra as a fifth-year intern in St. Olaf's Office of Music Organizations. He helped plan the band's tour appearance at the University of Denver's Newman Center for the Performing Arts, an assignment that reconnected him with Whitnah, who was on staff there.

By the time his internship ended, Walker had set his sights on moving to Denver. "The Connections trip helped me realize I wanted to live here," he says. In spring 2015, he landed a job as event coordinator at the Newman Center, thanks in part to Whitnah's influence and support.

"Sarah put a good word in for me and got my résumé in front of the hiring manager," says Walker, who in 2017 became the center's program manager. He now books touring ensembles and guest artists and develops community and educational partnerships.

"Connections had a direct line to what I'm doing now," Walker says. "Without my connection to Sarah, I wouldn't be where I am." He's giving back to Oles now, too, by attending Denver Connections events as an alumnus. "It's such a great program for helping students leverage St. Olaf's dedicated and well-connected alumni network."

"The Connections trip helped me realize I wanted to live here, and had a direct line to what I'm doing now."

— RAMSEY WALKER '14



REFLECTION

Elijah Verdoorn '18 | Software Engineer, Pandora Media · Oakland, California

Elijah Verdoorn got his first glimpse of the Bay Area on the San Francisco Connections trip — focused on biotech, entrepreneurship, and technology — during Interim of his junior year. As a computer science and mathematics double major, Verdoorn already knew that Silicon Valley was the place to be if he wanted to work at the forefront of technological development, with companies like Google, Facebook, and Apple headquartered in the area.

“Throughout college, I increasingly realized that coming out here to live and work would give me opportunities beyond what I might find in the Midwest,” Verdoorn says. “What drove me to Connections was that I needed to see what might eventually be my future.”


While the site visits to companies and networking opportunities with alumni in the technology field were important to him, Verdoorn says that the chance to physically set foot in California had the biggest impact.

“Walking around, I wondered, ‘Do I fit in?’ ‘Do I feel comfortable?’ ” he recalls. While two days isn’t a lot of time to answer those questions, the opportunity to get a feel for the Bay Area while assessing companies’ cultures and work environments allowed him to determine that, yes, working in technology in the area was within his reach.

“The Oles I met encouraged me to continue applying for internships,” he says. “It was great to see myself in these alums. They were driven and intelligent, and they had the technical acumen that I wanted to learn from. They also helped me see that working and living here was achievable.”

Verdoorn interned as a software engineer at Pandora Media, an Internet radio company, in the summer of 2017, an opportunity he doesn’t think he would have accepted — 1,500 miles from home — sight unseen. “Connections let me have the experience of testing the area out,” he says. At the end of the internship, Verdoorn was offered a full-time job with Pandora and, after graduating early from St. Olaf in December 2017, he returned to California permanently to start work as a software engineer for the company. He currently builds algorithms that utilize Pandora’s database of millions of hand-analyzed songs to improve a music listener’s experience.

“It’s truly exciting work using cutting-edge technology and machine learning with something as cool as music,” Verdoorn says. He continues to be an advocate for the Connections Program, hosting current Oles at Pandora during the most recent Connections trip to the Bay Area. “I enjoyed seeing myself in them from the other side of the experience,” he says.



“What drove me to
Connections was that I
needed to see what might
eventually be my future.”

— ELIJAH VERDOORN '18

OFTEN THE FIRST PERSON a student sees when entering the Piper Center is another student. Known as peer advisors, these 20 to 25 juniors and seniors help their peers on such concrete tasks as writing résumés and cover letters, searching for an internship or job, and creating a LinkedIn profile. They also are trained in the less straightforward task of helping their peers with career exploration and discernment.

“Our peer advisors are the initial contact for many students,” says Thando Kunene '13, an assistant director in the Piper Center who oversees the Peer Advisor program. “Some students feel a bit intimidated about visiting our office, and so we’ve found that having approachable, accessible peers as the face of the Piper Center is key to making all students comfortable.” To that end, Kunene selects 12 peer advisors each year, from about 80 applicants, who represent a broad range of majors, career interests, hometowns,

and identities. “Representation is important because we want students to be able to see themselves reflected in who works in the Piper Center so that they can envision being comfortable using our resources.”

Peer advisors receive 30 hours of training prior to each academic year and participate in ongoing training and team-building exercises during the school year. They’re available for walk-ins or appointments from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. In 2018–19, they held 1,283 appointments with their peers. In addition to their advising roles, they work as project assistants with a Piper Center staff member, helping to support events, compile data, conduct research, develop resources, and greet visiting employers for the center’s industry events. They’ll often choose to assist a staff member who aligns with their interests, such as the center’s pre-health coach, who partners with peer advisors who are interested in careers in the health professions.



PIPER CENTER PEER ADVISORS

Row one, L-R: Skye Nguyen '21, Ivet Reyes '21, Gretchen Ohlmacher '21, Alana Barnhart '20, Kgomotso Magagula '21, Juan Romo '20, Amy Requa '21, Lauren Markowski '21, Thando Kunene '13. Row two: Mara Tostengard '21, Sydney Wagner '21, Evelyn Aguilar '20, Megan Hussey '20, Joanna Hancock '20, Elle Wilson '20, Maggie Wilson '21. Row three: Henry Henson '20, Arjun Ramachandran '20, Amy Imdieke '21, Soren Schwendeman '20, Lindsey Jansen '21, Charles Hamer '20. Row four: Karim Khalid '20, Logan Luiz '20, Heri Lopez '21, Arden Sasak '22, Ben Christiason '20, Katie Anderson '20, Erik Lepisto '20

PHOTOGRAPHED AT HOLLAND HALL BY TOM ROSTER

REFLECTION

Maya Lehmann '18 | Refugee Resettlement Case Manager, Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota · Minneapolis

A former peer advisor herself, Kunene has firsthand knowledge of the important role that peer advisors play in the Piper Center's success in reaching students. "A lot of our services are advertised word-of-mouth, and our positive reputation is upheld through what our peer advisors say about us," she says. "They're great ambassadors for our events and programs."

Peer advisors also benefit from the skills they develop in their work at the Piper Center. Working on the front lines of vocational discernment, they have a leg up when it comes to navigating their own career path. In helping their peers, they have to be adept at articulating complex concepts, writing well, and assessing needs and then matching those needs to the appropriate resources or services. "No matter what field our peer advisors go into, these communication skills will serve them well throughout their careers," Kunene says.

Many of the skills Maya Lehmann uses in her work as a refugee resettlement case manager for Lutheran Social Service, like empathy and working one-on-one with people, she developed as a peer advisor in the Piper Center.

"As a peer advisor, I hoped to be as welcoming as possible," Lehmann says. "To listen to my peers, to understand their vulnerability in coming to us for help, and to reassure them that they weren't alone. We'd connect them to resources that helped them meet their goals."


Lehmann's studies and interests at St. Olaf offered multiple ways in which her peers could connect with her. She earned a triple major in music, religion, and race and ethnic studies. She also was a four-year member of the St. Olaf Orchestra; co-director of Reaching Our Goals, a mentoring program matching Oles with middle school students; and a member of the Filipino Club.

Lehmann helped the Piper Center's Thando Kunene plan Ole Social Impact, a networking event connecting students with alumni working in the social justice sector. She also participated in the Social Entrepreneurship Scholars program, interning at Daily Work, a nonprofit that guides and mentors job seekers.

"The Piper Center had an atmosphere of inspired energy and innovation," she says. "I appreciated that the staff was always open to new ideas and students' perspectives."

As a case manager for refugees newly arrived in the United States, Lehmann helps her clients with everything from housing and employment to schooling and health care. "I connect them with resources and help them integrate into the community," she says. "The best moments for me are when they don't need me anymore."

The job, like her peer advisor role, requires Lehmann to be empathetic to other people's vulnerabilities and struggles. "Obviously, the stressors on refugees are very different from those affecting the students I worked with at the Piper Center, but I see parallels in how I can be welcoming and kind and can help to calm their anxieties," she says. Eventually, she hopes to parlay her experiences in refugee support into clinical social work focused on clients dealing with mental health issues.



"As a peer advisor, I hoped to be as welcoming as possible to my peers, while connecting them to resources that helped them meet their goals."

— MAYA LEHMANN '18

ENTREPRENEURIAL, INNOVATIVE, AND CREATIVE students got a boost in May 2018 with the opening of the Makerspace, St. Olaf's new hub for students in search of creative, hands-on solutions to tricky problems. Located on the second floor of Rølvaag Library overlooking the circulation desk, the Makerspace is a collaborative effort between St. Olaf's Digital Scholarship Center (DiSCO), the library, and the Piper Center to help students develop and engage in design-thinking skills.

"The Makerspace is dedicated to the hands-on making of something, whether it's a digital product or a physical product," says Ezra Plemons, instructional technologist for digital media. "It's part of a national movement in makers' culture, like craft beer and handbound books, as pushback against the Internet age when people are missing a physical connection with things."

Students can access mechanical and hand fabrication tools — such as Dremel rotary tools and sewing machines — and modeling materials, robotics equipment, and supplies like fabric, paper, beads, and wire, all of the tactile materials that students need to build a prototype or simply to brainstorm an idea. The DiSCO, located next to the Makerspace, offers the digital resources needed for coding, design, 3-D and large format printing, and audio/video work.

In its first full year, the Makerspace saw an influx of students working on a broad range of projects. Students in an Asian studies course used the space to create maps that visualized villages and geographical movements, and environmental studies students built machines that illustrated the chain reactions of environmental policy. Student entrepreneurs in the Glacier Rescue Project, a group raising awareness about glacial melt and climate change, used the space to create logo patches for refurbished clothing they sold to raise money for environmental organizations.



The Makerspace is part of St. Olaf's concerted effort to sustain a burgeoning entrepreneurial spirit among students. A generous gift from Steve Moksnes '61 and Billie Slethaug Moksnes '61 to expand resources for entrepreneurial learning included funding supplies for the Makerspace, the hiring of Margaret Bransford as the Piper Center's associate director of entrepreneurship and outreach, and the establishment of the Entrepreneurial Scholars program. That program provides paid internship opportunities for a cohort of 10 students at start-up companies or in other entrepreneurial environments.

Bransford is responsible for overseeing an array of support for students interested in entrepreneurship, from managing the long-running Finstad Entrepreneurial Grant program, which awards funds to students who want to test out an entrepreneurial idea, to coaching students in the Ole Cup, an annual pitch competition that helps students turn business ideas into reality.

She's also tasked with strategizing new ways of encouraging design-thinking and creative problem-solving skills in students by developing co-curricular programs that leverage and complement existing faculty expertise to assist all students in entrepreneurial ventures, regardless of major.

"The liberal arts are very conducive to the entrepreneurial mindset, and Oles in particular seem to have a natural aptitude for the field," Bransford says. "Entrepreneurship can be about more than just scaling a business. It can be about learning how to support yourself in something you're passionate about, for example, as a solopreneur musician, artist, or consultant." She notes the importance of entrepreneurial education amidst a national trend toward a gig economy.

"Regardless of whether students go on to start a venture, St. Olaf is well-positioned to be a leader in teaching them to be flexible, to work under ambiguity, and to be creative problem solvers," she says. 🐾

MARLA HILL HOLT '88 is a freelance writer and regular contributor to *St. Olaf Magazine*.

By the Numbers

RECENT DATA GIVE A GLIMPSE INTO THE PIPER CENTER'S IMPACT.

In 2018-19, **72** percent of students attended an appointment or event at the Piper Center (it's not just seniors, either; attendance is nearly level across class years).

Career coaches and peer advisors fulfilled **6,679** appointments with students during the 2018-19 academic year.

71 percent of students in the Class of 2019 participated in an internship.

89 percent of students in the Class of 2019 participated in an experiential learning opportunity, including an internship, mentored research, field experience, academic civic engagement, and long-term shadowing.

St. Olaf awarded **\$580,000** in funding to support student participation in internships and other career-enhancing experiences.

More than **650** students have participated in a Connections program since its inception in 2011.

in 2018-19, **85** students attended the Quo Vadis sophomore retreat, and **1,011** students have attended since the first retreat in 2011.

96 percent of graduates in the Class of 2018 were working, engaged in a full-time service program, or pursuing further education within nine months of graduation.

REFLECTION

Harry Skalski '20 | Northfield, Minnesota · Computer Science Major

Growing up outside Northfield, Minnesota, Harry Skalski often used his family's woodworking and welding shop to make things. So it's no surprise that he's a regular user of St. Olaf's new Makerspace, whether it's for coursework or for personal projects, such as 3-D printing new game pieces to replace missing ones from board games.

"The space is always busy, with students working on class projects or personal stuff, like making clothes or posters," he says. "The 3-D printer is very popular for making prototypes or objects needed for projects."

Skalski took the *Introduction to the Engineering Process* course during Interim 2019 with Physics Professor Alden Adolph. Skalski's small group designed and engineered a cup holder that attaches to a dinner plate, with the hope of eliminating the need for a cafeteria tray, thus reducing food waste and the use of plastics in the making of trays. Their prototype, which they tested in Stav Hall, was printed in the Makerspace.

"Through a small focus group, we discovered that our product needs a few design tweaks to move forward," Skalski says. "The mechanism holding the cup to the plate felt flimsy, and students wanted it to be sleeker and sturdier."

Skalski also has used the Makerspace for a physics course that required students to make a 3-D model of a particular physics problem. "My group considered how fast the comic book character the Flash would have to run to stop Earth from spinning," Skalski says. They created a poster and a 3-D model of Earth with a Flash figurine to illustrate the physics principles used in solving the problem.

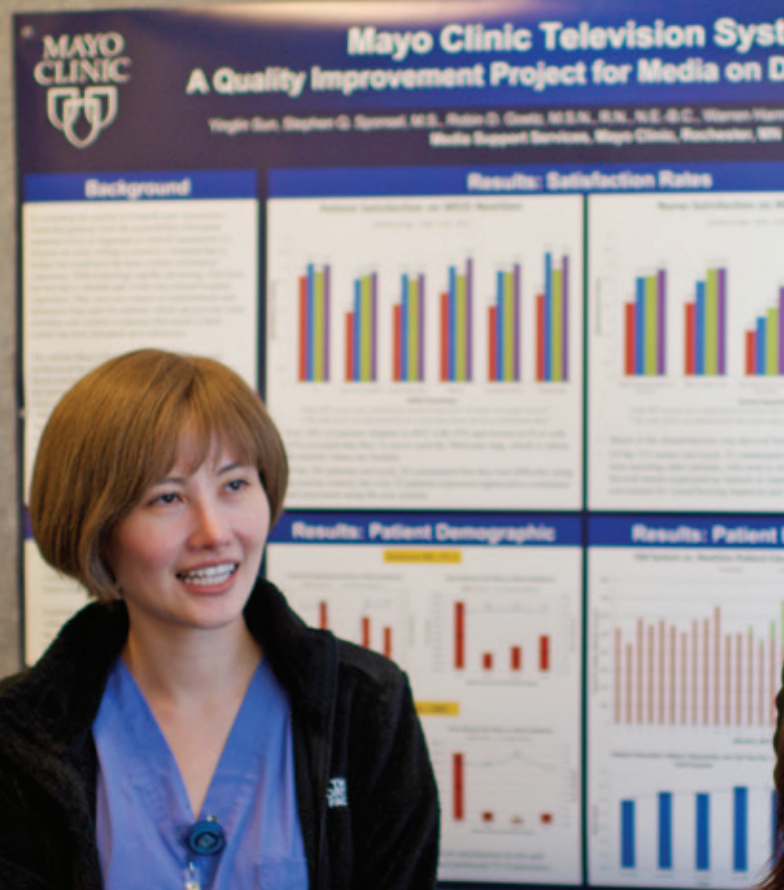
"The Makerspace is an important creative outlet for students," Skalski says. "It helps us think through problems and come up with solutions that are innovative and hands-on."

"The Makerspace helps us come up with solutions that are innovative and hands-on."

— HARRY SKALSKI '20



THE IMPORTANCE Internshi



St. Olaf Health Scholar Yinglin Sun '21 presents her research at Mayo Clinic to neurologist Erik St. Louis, M.D., '87 and Cornell College Mayo intern Yumeng Tao. PHOTOGRAPHED BY TOM ROSTER

OF pS



Internships, now seen as an essential first step toward full-time work, allow St. Olaf students to test drive careers while sharpening their skills, defining their interests, and applying classroom knowledge to the real world.

By Marla Hill Holt '88

When Stephen Sponsel '82, P'12, P'09 graduated from St. Olaf with a B.A. degree in art and significant coursework in economics, he thought his career options were limited to advertising and marketing in the for-profit business sector. He had no idea he'd spend his career as an administrator at Mayo Clinic, one of the world's leading health care organizations "with a mission you just can't fail to be engaged with," Sponsel says. He is a director in Mayo's Media Support Services, which manages all aspects of media at the clinic, from video conferencing to print and online media to medical photography and surgical video.

"Everybody knows about doctors and nurses and other medical professionals at Mayo," he says. "But in an organization this large and this specialized, the number of administrative opportunities related to health care is enormous."

It was precisely those hidden administrative positions that Sponsel wanted to illuminate for St. Olaf students when he signed on three years ago to sponsor an intern in the Media Support Services Project, part of St. Olaf's Health Scholars at the Mayo Clinic program. The program supports eight interns each summer in various roles at the clinic.

"Our administrative internship allows students to see the variety of job roles that have great clinical impact," Sponsel says. "They see multiple dimensions of the subject matter they're interested in."

Sponsel created the Media Support Services internship around a long-term development project: building the next generation of Mayo Clinic TV, an interactive TV system that provides patient education, movies, and network programs for patients. Three St. Olaf interns have worked on measuring, reporting, and analyzing patients' and nurses' satisfaction with the new system, including this summer's intern, nursing student Yinglin Sun '21.

"Yinglin is getting a unique perspective on the nursing role from the administrative side," Sponsel says. "The TV system is a non-nursing technology that has a substantial impact on the nurses' day because they're pulled into helping patients use it.

Yinglin has been a part of helping us figure out how to improve the system's usability so that nurses can go about their more critical duties."

Sponsor's mentorship of St. Olaf interns is just one example of Oles helping current students explore career possibilities through experience in the workplace. This summer, students are interning for companies and organizations across many sectors, from the arts to business to technology.

The investment of alumni, parents, and friends of the college in the Piper Center for Vocation and Career has been instrumental in creating myriad internship opportunities for students, says Kirsten Cahoon '98, senior associate director of employer and alumni relations at the Piper Center for Vocation and Career.

"We love to work with alumni, parents, and other supporters who have a genuine interest in mentoring and helping to develop our students," Cahoon says, noting that such support creates a wider variety of internship opportunities for students to pursue. Each career coach in the Piper Center is an industry specialist who maintains relationships with alumni, parents, and employers to leverage connections for the benefit of students. The center also manages a database of internships recently held by Oles to further assist students in finding the right fit.

For students who may have financial concerns about applying for internships and other pre-professional activities, the center offers up to \$2,000 in funding for unpaid or underpaid internships. St. Olaf's Johnson Family Opportunity Fund helps high-need students cover the cost not only of living expenses connected with internships but also of other expenses, from purchasing workplace attire to flying to an interview to paying application fees for graduate and professional school.

"Students who have completed internships graduate not only with a world-class liberal arts education but also with demonstrable skills and experiences that help propel them forward."

— KIRSTEN CAHOON '98

Support from alumni, parents, and friends of the college has also helped St. Olaf distinguish itself in the internship realm with its summer and Interim cohort programs. These programs — including Rockswold Health Scholars, Health Scholars at the Mayo Clinic, Social Entrepreneurship Scholars, Svoboda Legal Scholars, Mayo Innovation Scholars, St. Olaf Entrepreneurial Scholars, and Norway Innovation Scholars — support small groups of four to ten students interning in specific fields. Students receive a stipend, benefit from shared experiences, and sometimes live together.

Another distinguishing feature of St. Olaf's internship program is its array of experiential opportunities for students interested in careers in the health professions. Along with the two Health Scholars programs, St. Olaf supports a clinical and research



Health Scholar Intern Abubakarr "Sid" (Sidique) Konneh '21 presented "The Safety and Efficacy of Contemporary Induction of Chemoradiation for Locally Advanced Esophageal Cancer" at Mayo Clinic in July. Earlier this year, Konneh won the Ole Cup for his social venture AION, Inc., which seeks to eradicate maternal and infant mortality in Sierra Leone using drones to deliver maternal delivery kits.

internship at the University of Minnesota's Blood and Marrow Transplant Center and a biomedical ethics research internship at Children's Mercy Hospital in Kansas City, Missouri. Other students intern with Consultative Health and Medicine in the Twin Cities to gain a broader understanding of a collaborative model of health care for senior citizens. In addition, students routinely intern at the Center for Sports Medicine and Rehabilitation in Northfield, Wieber Physical Therapy in Faribault, and TRIA Orthopedic in the Twin Cities. The Piper Center also offers the Pathways to Healthcare internship program in collaboration with the Northfield Retirement Center and Three Links, which provides assisted living, nursing home care, and senior living.

Many of the cohort internship programs offer experiences that wouldn't necessarily be available to students without Ole connections. For example, Svoboda Legal Scholars have performed legal and research assistance in clinics at law schools, in areas such as child advocacy and immigration law, alongside attorneys and law professors across the Upper Midwest.

"It's one of only two programs in the nation that have these sorts of opportunities open to undergraduates," Cahoon says.

The cohort internship model as a holistic experience illustrates a key principle of the Piper Center's approach to career coaching.

"There's greater acknowledgment today that the whole person matters, and with that comes an increased blending of work and life outside of work," Cahoon says. "Students today want to be fulfilled. They want to do something that is highly valued and to be able to see how that work fits into a greater whole." One of the Piper Center's goals, according to Cahoon, is to be dynamic and responsive to the needs of students in defining what type of work best matches their interests and skills and will lead to a meaningful life after college.

An experience like an internship is vital in that it serves many functions, including helping students explore and test out their interests, building their skills and applying their academic learning, making professional contacts who can be mentors and guides, and even securing a full-time job after graduation. It's not uncommon for students to have an internship after both their second and third years at St. Olaf.

"The most important thing is skill building," Cahoon says. "Students who've completed internships graduate not only with a world-class liberal arts education, but also with demonstrable skills and experiences that help propel them forward."

The first goal of St. Olaf's current strategic plan is to enhance student participation in, and experience of, high-impact educational practices, which include experiential learning opportunities like internships, mentored research, and practicums. To meet that goal, St. Olaf is committed to maintaining the percentage of graduating seniors who engage in such practices at 85 percent or higher. According to the results of the First Destination Survey (administered to all graduating seniors), student participation in high-impact educational practices has been rising, from 79.5 percent of the Class of 2016 to 89 percent of the Class of 2019.

"The most interesting thing we uncovered from this year's First Destination Survey is that students' strongest predictor of high confidence about the future was having completed an internship," Cahoon says. "Students of all demographics — first generation, low-income, all majors — said an internship was the co-curricular activity that had the most impact in giving them confidence as they move out into the workplace."

St. Olaf students interned at a variety of companies and organizations this summer. We've highlighted a few on the following pages to give you an idea of the range of internship opportunities Oles pursue.

INTERN SPOTLIGHT

Bronwyn Redvers-Lee '20

Music major, Media Studies concentration
Marketing Intern, Smithsonian Folkways
Recordings · Washington, D.C.

Without the financial support of the Piper Center, Bronwyn Redvers-Lee likely would be spending the summer working at the daycare where she'd been employed during the previous two summers. That's because her internship at Smithsonian Folkways Recordings is unpaid and, like many students wanting the experience of an internship but also needing to earn money during school break, she thought it wasn't feasible.

"I'm living at home [in Takoma Park, Maryland], but commuting to Washington, D.C., isn't cheap," Redvers-Lee says. "The funding from the Piper Center is really helpful and generous." The stipend she receives is supporting her work as a marketing intern at the Smithsonian Institution's nonprofit record label, which is a part of the Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage.

"I grew up around the music business. My dad started a blues record label in Mississippi in the '90s, and he influenced my music tastes and encouraged me to study music," Redvers-Lee says. In work separate from her internship, Redvers-Lee and her father are reviving his record label by co-producing two unreleased albums of blues music recorded in the late '90s. She is mixing the tracks at Tonal Park studio in Takoma Park and determining what might need to be added, like additional instruments.

"It's another project I wouldn't have time for if I were working at the daycare," she says.

Redvers-Lee also enjoys filming and editing videos, and her work-study job on campus involves recording and livestreaming recitals and concerts. "Media studies is a broad and quickly developing field, and so I've been trying to have outside-the-classroom experiences to dip my toe in and figure out what I enjoy doing, which is what my internship is about," she says.

At Folkways Recordings — which records all genres of music, from folk to jazz to hip hop — Redvers-Lee has been editing liner notes of re-released albums, as well as promoting new releases in the press and uploading them to streaming platforms. "Working with streaming is new to me as someone who's creating content, not just listening to it," she says. "I'm curating playlists that say something about Folkways' mission and contemporary life."

The internship has been the perfect blend of her interests in music and media studies, Redvers-Lee says, enabling her to apply knowledge from courses in musicology, arts management, and St. Olaf's American Conversations program, such as understanding the role music played during the civil rights movement. She's also using some of the same skills she deploys in her work-study job.

"I want to go into something in media studies that's informed by music, and this internship is helping me learn how the two are connected," she says. "I've observed all aspects of the label, from producing and editing to publicity to digital platforms. It's given me the confidence to apply for jobs across a broad spectrum."



PHOTOGRAPHED AT SMITHSONIAN FOLKWAYS
RECORDINGS, WASHINGTON, D.C.,
BY ERIN SCOTT/POLARIS

INTERN SPOTLIGHT

Sydney Wagner '21 | Economics major
Matt Whear '20 | Mathematics major,
Statistics and Management Studies concentrations
Venture Capital Analyst Interns, Capita3
Minneapolis, Minnesota

When looking for an internship that would help them learn the knowledge and skills needed to succeed in the venture capital space, Sydney Wagner and Matt Whear were both drawn to Capita3. It is a small, early-stage venture capital fund that invests in women-led startups in the health care sector, particularly in the Midwest, an area that doesn't see a lot of venture capital investment. The company supports women innovators in building their companies and hosts programs that help women grow their skills in leadership.

"There's a huge inequity between the amount of funding that women as opposed to men receive, and Capita3 is trying to bridge that gap," Wagner says. "What really stood out to me is that Capita3 isn't just giving money to women entrepreneurs. They're also focused on developing women as leaders. I find that mission really inspiring."

While Whear and Wagner are both venture capital analyst interns, each is performing different duties. Wagner has primarily been researching industry and sector trends in the health care space. "I'm looking at where venture capital firms are investing their money and asking questions like 'Does a women's health care company have to have an app to be competitive?'" she says.

Whear has been studying deal syndication, researching other VC firms with similar

missions to Capita3 that might become investment partners. He has been working on getting Capita3's name in front of accelerators and incubators, as well as conducting some fund modeling. "I've been helping make a tool that models different fund allocation scenarios and have also created equity models for various investment opportunities," he says.

Both students assist the firm with its "deal flow," which helps venture capitalists track available investment opportunities so that they can find the most attractive ones, both in terms of risk and potential. The interns also had the opportunity to sit in on pitch meetings, listening to entrepreneurs and asking them questions about such things as marketing strategies and how they hope to outcompete other businesses.

"That was a great experience, and not an opportunity that most interns get," Whear says.

As members of the cohort of St. Olaf's Entrepreneurial Scholars program, Whear and Wagner benefit from being in a group of 10 students interning at startups and entrepreneurial ventures. Students in the program — established by a generous gift from Steve Moksnes '61 and Billie Slethaug Moksnes '61 to expand resources for entrepreneurial learning — receive funding from the Piper Center. They gather twice over the summer with the center's Kirsten Cahoon, senior associate director of employer and alumni relations, and Margaret Bransford, associate director of entrepreneurship, to discuss their experiences and learn from each other's successes and challenges.

Wagner has found that the skills she has developed in St. Olaf's liberal arts environment have come in handy at Capita3. "While my accounting classes help with understanding cash flow and the different aspects of a financial statement, it's the strong writing skills and critical and analytical thinking that I've developed at St. Olaf that have been most helpful," she says, noting that Oles are comfortable wearing many different hats.

Whear says the work he did at Capita3 — combined with a previous internship at Traveler's Insurance — has broadened his experience in combining his interests in math, statistics, and management, allowing him to apply what he has learned in the classroom in a hands-on setting.

"There's so much to learn in an internship, from the real-world experience to figuring out if that particular work is really what you want to pursue," says Whear. "This internship at Capita3 has been a good experience of mixing my interest in overall business with the more analytical side of finance."



INTERN SPOTLIGHT

Yinglin Sun '21 | Women and Gender Studies and Nursing majors, Family Studies concentration
Research Intern, Mayo Clinic Media Support Services · Rochester, Minnesota

Mayo Clinic recently moved away from the traditional cable-based TV system in each patient's room to a Netflix-like streaming service called Mayo Clinic TV (MCTV), which offers on-demand shows and movies, educational videos, and relaxation/music content. The change created a long-term project for the clinic's Media Support Services, which is evaluating the effectiveness of the streaming platform in satisfying patients' entertainment and educational needs.

Yinglin Su had a hand in helping out with the project this summer as a research intern. The internship opened her eyes to how something as seemingly simple as TV viewing can affect patient outcomes.

"Mayo's television system plays a significant role in a patient's experience," Sun says. "The entertainment content can distract patients from pain, boredom, and worry, and provide some normalcy to their routine, which has been disrupted by admission to the hospital. The education content empowers patients to participate in their care, which leads to significantly better health outcomes."

As a member of the clinic's Media Support Services team, Sun helped research ways to improve MCTV to make it more user-friendly, particularly for older patients. She compiled and analyzed the results of nursing and patient satisfaction surveys and then presented her findings to the project's executive team. The work required strong communication skills, as Sun found herself working with a variety of Mayo constituents, from patients and nursing managers to staff members in the Office of Patient Education.

Though an internship in media support services might seem like an odd match for a nursing student, Sun says that's not the case.

"At St. Olaf, we're taught to look into the social, environmental, and mental factors that contribute to a patient's health. We're taught to be analysts, to ease patients' concerns and illnesses in ways beyond pharmaceutical treatments," she says. "I think a patient's experience is just as important as getting their illness treated, and oftentimes a comfortable hospital environment can improve both the patient's physical and mental health. This was why I chose this specific project and why I chose nursing — to build personal connections with my patients and critically address their needs to provide them quality holistic care."



PHOTOGRAPHED AT MAYO CLINIC BY TOM ROSTER

Sun was mentored at Mayo Clinic by Stephen Sponsel '82, P'12, P'09, a director in Media Support Services. She is part of St. Olaf's alumni-supported Health Scholars at the Mayo Clinic program, a cohort of eight interns who receive stipends from the college and live together in Rochester, Minnesota, while pursuing internships at Mayo.

Sun plans to become a public health nurse, working to eliminate health disparities by addressing the linguistic and cultural barriers that face many minority communities. She says interning at Mayo helped her realize that public health implies solving problems for all kinds of patients.

"Improving the MCTV system's usability required asking questions like 'How do we improve it to meet the needs of hearing impaired patients?' 'How could the TV remote be modified to reduce bacteria harboring in the cracks?' These are public health concerns, and I am learning to think in multiple dimensions to ensure patient satisfaction. The skills I've learned here will certainly be applicable as a public health nurse." 🦄

MARLA HILL HOLT '88 is a regular contributor to *St. Olaf Magazine*.

WITH T-REX COOKIE, TINA
REXING '95 HAS CREATED A
THRIVING BUSINESS THAT FITS
HER PERSONALITY TO A "T"

TOUGH COOKIE

BY ANDY STEINER

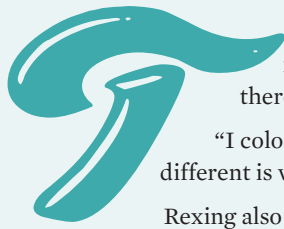
PHOTOGRAPHED BY
TOM ROSTER





T-Rex
Cookie

#SizeMatters



ina Rexing doesn't fit the stereotype of a cookie entrepreneur. First of all, there's the matter of her hair. Rexing, 46, sports a completely original look.

"I color my hair purple," she says. "At my age, that's considered different. And different is what I want to be."

Rexing also has an impressive collection of intricate steampunk tattoos running up and down her left arm. Many — like the measuring spoons or the mixing bowl that stands in for a hot-air balloon basket — have baking themes. Others, like the gears and clocks or the broken light bulb bursting with butterflies on her bicep, symbolize Rexing's unique approach to life.

"I have a rebellious streak," she says by way of explanation. "I always have. I was that way at St. Olaf too." There were times in college, Rexing admits, when her rebellious streak led her to feel like she didn't fit in. She pauses, and then adds with a casual shrug, "But that's how it's been my whole life. I've never been a huge 'rah-rah' cheerleader for anything, even St. Olaf. I don't really fit in anywhere."

For a person who often *felt* like she didn't fit in, Rexing has always done a good job of seeming, from the outside at least, like she was fitting in just fine.

Rexing was born in the Philippines and immigrated to Minnesota with her parents when she was two. As the oldest child of three and only girl (her younger brother, Carlo Castillejos, is also an Ole), she says she felt pressure from a young age to succeed. When she was deciding on colleges, she chose St. Olaf in part because it is known for having good economics and business programs: she'd known for years that when it came time to choose a major, she had to pick from a narrow set of preapproved options.

"One thing my parents instilled in me was, 'You will not major in philosophy or English or art. Those things can't get you jobs,'" Rexing says. She ended up majoring in economics, with an emphasis in environmental studies and management.

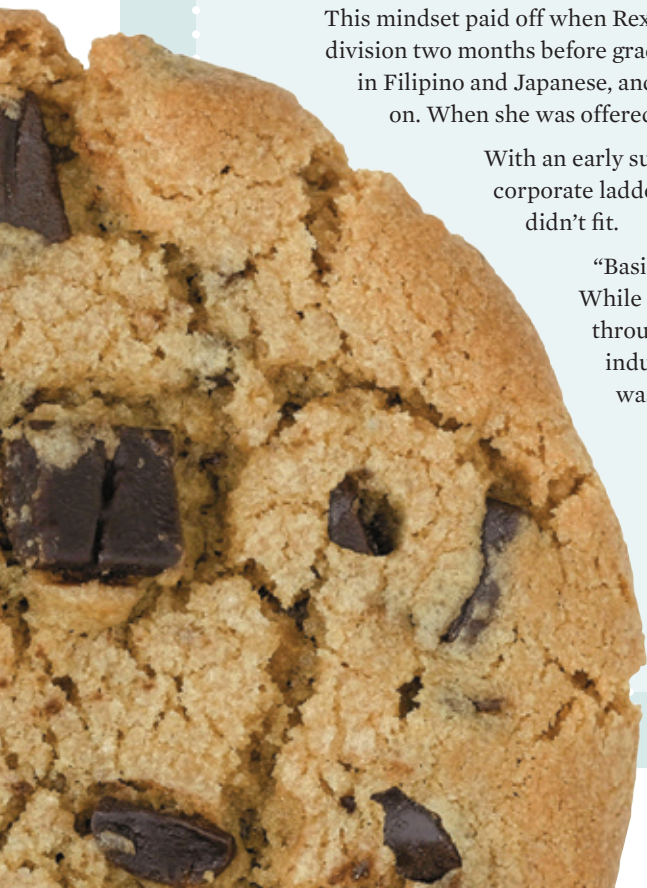
At St. Olaf, Rexing says her approach was to put her head down and focus on her studies, with an eye aimed on her future career. "I muscled through," she says. " 'Muscling through the situation' has been the theme of my life."

This mindset paid off when Rexing landed a prime job in Northwest Airlines' coveted Pacific division two months before graduation. The airline's recruiters were attracted by Rexing's fluency in Filipino and Japanese, and intrigued by the colorful cloud paper she'd printed her resume on. When she was offered the job, she was the youngest person ever hired in the division.

With an early success like this one, Rexing felt she was predestined to climb the corporate ladder, so she muscled through, even though she often felt like she didn't fit.

"Basically, in corporate you have to stick in this expected mold," she says. While she now says she often felt constrained by corporate life, she rose through the ranks at Northwest until the 9-11 terrorist attacks put the industry into disarray. Her entire department was eliminated while she was on maternity leave with her first child on September 27, 2001.

After that setback, Rexing launched on a career path that she now likes to describe as "winding." She did marketing for a tennis center for a few years — eventually becoming a certified tennis instructor — before plunging headfirst back into the corporate world, taking a series of six-figure jobs in finance and IT at some of Minnesota's top corporations.





FLEX
Cookie Nibbles

McDonald's
McFlurry



I'm fine tough
cookie



Rexing credits her St. Olaf education with her flexible approach to work. “When I do talks about my background and what my liberal arts education has given me,” she explains, “I always say, ‘The liberal arts has given me this winding-road path, because it teaches you how to be good at a lot of things or have interest in a lot of things.’”

During her corporate years, Rexing fed her creative soul through baking. She’d been making sweets for friends and family for decades, and when she was an adult, she began entering her carefully researched and tested creations in the Minnesota State Fair. She’s got a pile of ribbons to prove it.

“I made everything from cookies to cakes to breads,” she says. But she always insisted that it was just a hobby. “The entire time people were saying things like, ‘Why aren’t you doing this for a living?’”

Though Rexing always brushed off suggestions that she pitch it all and go into the baking business, the idea of pursuing it always lingered in the back of her mind. When she finally had enough of corporate life and quit her job, Rexing made an effort to look for another job for a few months. But soon she found herself writing a business plan for a company she dubbed T-Rex Cookie.

“I had been thinking,” Rexing says, “what could I possibly do for a living that I might actually like, versus spending all my time working in a cubicle?”

With her business plan in hand, and support from her husband, her parents, and a committed team of friends and former co-workers, Rexing decided to take the plunge. In early 2015, she launched a Kickstarter campaign and went to a bank where she convinced them to give her a line of credit. Her plan was to make cookies and sell them at the Minneapolis Farmers Market.

Rexing rented space in a commercial kitchen in South Minneapolis, and with help from her support team, she began turning out tray after tray of cookies. At first, the cookies were average sized, but then Rexing realized that the scooper she used to measure out dough was aggravating her tennis elbow. So she started making larger cookies that didn’t require a scooper. The resulting dinosaur-sized, half-pound cookies were a hit — and a perfect match for her company name.

“People always say, ‘Oh. They’re T-Rex cookies because they’re big.’” Rexing says with a laugh. But the gigantic-dinosaur connection was just a coincidence, she insists: “Oh, by the way, my name is *Tina Rexing*. Get it?”

Shoppers at the farmers market loved Rexing’s cookies, which she made in creative flavors like sea salt caramel chocolate chip, orange dreamsicle, monster, and dill pickle. She eventually expanded to other farmers markets, and by October 2015, she got a big break when the Minnesota Orchestra Selected T-Rex Cookie as its dessert vendor.

“I packaged my cookies for the orchestra, labeled them, and they would sell them during intermission,” Rexing says. “They were super popular.”

Ever the marketer, Rexing worked hard to promote T-Rex Cookie on social media. “I had a really strong, loyal Facebook and Instagram following,” she says.

One day, the *Today* show invited viewers to name the best cookie in their state.

“All of my social media followers — a bunch of them — said T-Rex Cookie’s sea salt caramel chocolate chip cookie,” Rexing says. “Two days later, I get a phone call from the *Today* show.”

The call was an invitation to fly to New York City and appear on the show. Rexing jumped at the chance. “I was on for maybe a hot second,” she says, explaining that the entire segment was surprisingly brief: “There were two other bakers on, and the whole thing lasted like 45 seconds.”

Turns out a hot second was all Rexing needed.

When the *Today* show segment aired, Rexing was still taking online orders for her cookies on Etsy. “I had it set up so that every time I took an Etsy order, my phone would beep,” she recalls. “After I was on the *Today* show, my phone just blew up.”

“I HAD BEEN
THINKING, WHAT
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From there, T-Rex was launched to another level. Rexing left her rental kitchen, hired 15 employees, and ran a cafe near the University of Minnesota for a couple of years. When her building was sold to developers who planned to tear it down and build condos, Rexing decided to change her business model. Today she sells cookies three days a week out of a small storefront in Eagan, Minnesota; the back two-thirds of the shop is dedicated to cookie production and online sales and shipping.

Although her Eagan shop is thriving, in her typical style, Rexing is not content to just coast. Her business continues to sprout tentacles, with a cookie contract for US Bank Stadium (she supplied cookies to the Super Bowl, and now T-Rex Cookies are available in the stadium's clubs and suites). She's also selling bulk dough so that restaurants can bake their own T-Rex Cookies. In the midst of all this growth, she's been giving back to her alma mater, judging the annual Ole Cup and speaking to students about her unique entrepreneurial journey.

Now her business is poised to make a major leap. Rexing is in the process of investigating franchise opportunities: imagine T-Rex Cookie shops popping up in malls and on street corners nationwide, or even worldwide.

"That's a concept I'm tossing around in my brain," Rexing says. "Can T-Rex Cookie go international? Can the company be owned by somebody else and just ride on the brand? And would it be profitable? That's the million dollar question."

Finding answers to those questions will take focus and experimentation, two things that Rexing excels in. Curious to see if T-Rex Cookies could be made by anyone, she purposely hired workers for her Eagan shop with no baking experience. (The cookies turned out great!) And she's mapping out a vision of what a franchise shop would look and feel like.

Rexing's not letting the exciting possibility of expansion distract her from her core business. At her Eagan location on an overcast summer afternoon, Rexing proudly shows off her latest acquisition: a colorful (to match her hair) T-Rex Cookie food truck, paid for through her second successful Kickstarter campaign.

The food truck was something Rexing envisioned doing when she first started T-Rex, but in the four and a half years since she stepped out on her own, the business grew so fast that she never got around to actually outfitting a truck. Now it's here, parked in front of her Eagan shop and ready to be loaded with fresh cookies.

Rexing opens the truck's back door, showing where the cookies and milk (because you can't sell cookies without milk) will be stored.

For all of Rexing's accomplishments, this one feels concrete, and she seems particularly content and at ease. It doesn't take long to tour a food truck, so in a hot second, Rexing's stepping out of the truck and firmly closing the door behind her. But her satisfaction is evident.

"You couldn't get any further from a cubicle," she says, flashing a satisfied smile as she gives the truck a quick pat. It's like Rexing has finally created a world where she fits in, and it suits her perfectly. 🍪

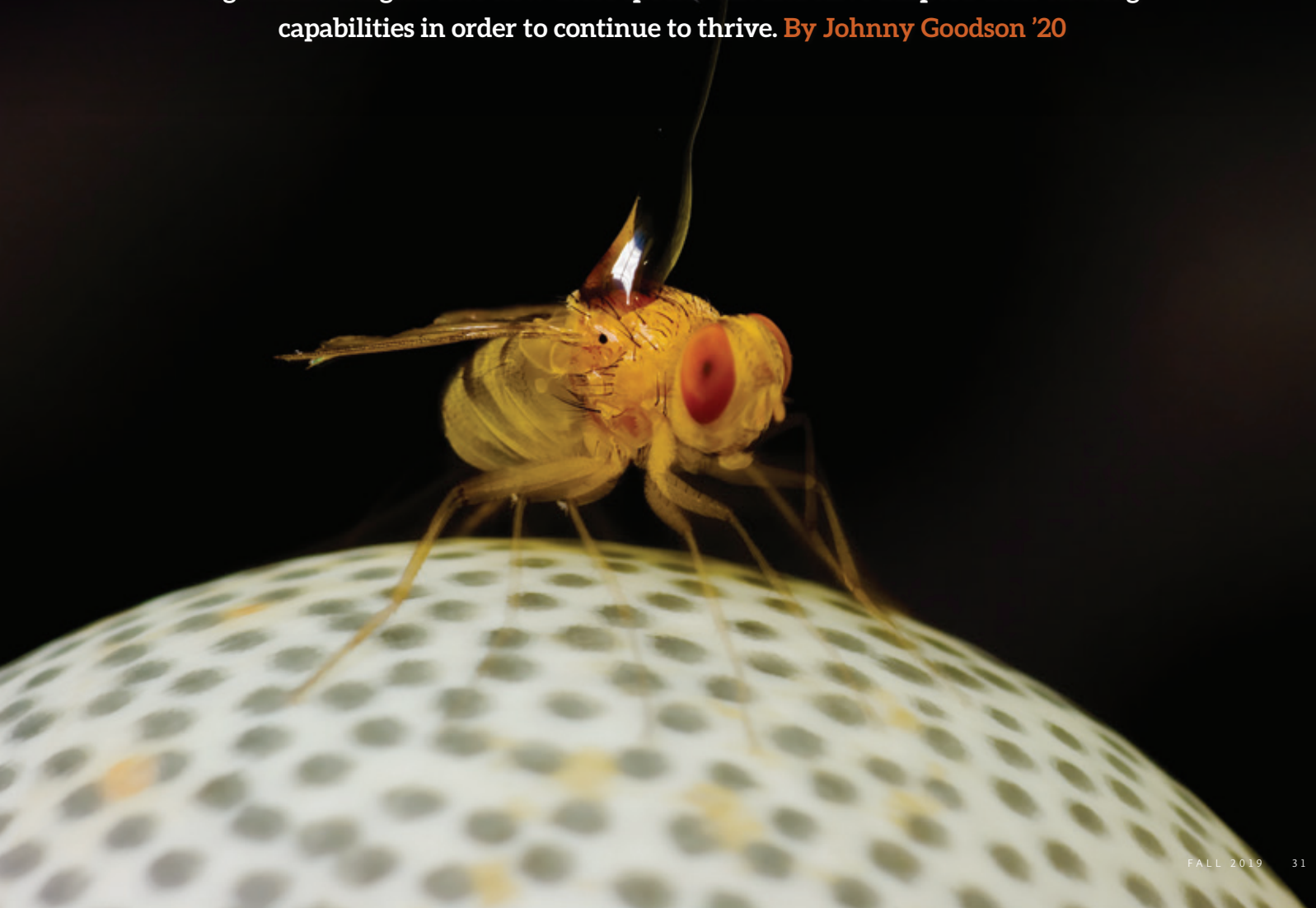
ANDY STEINER is a Twin Cities freelance writer.



CALLS OF THE WILD

A detailed illustration of a fly, colored in a vibrant green, positioned centrally between the words 'CALLS' and 'OF THE' in the title.

Nearly all animals depend on sound for survival, including flies and crickets. Biology Professor Norman Lee's collaborative research with students is providing significant insights into how these species can and have adapted their hearing capabilities in order to continue to thrive. **By Johnny Goodson '20**





The parasitic fly *Ormia ochracea* with its host cricket, *Gryllus rubens*. Flies are not the only species who depend on hearing for survival that Lee has analyzed in his lab. He also has studied the adaptive auditory systems of female tree frogs, who have evolved to solve the so-called “cocktail party problem” by separating and locating the mating calls of a single male tree frog out of a forest full of background noise in order to reproduce.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF NORMAN LEE



In a Regents Hall neurobiology lab, Kari Jirik '20 carefully tethers a fly to an insect-sized treadmill. She closes the door to the soundproof room that houses the treadmill system, then flips on the speakers that pipe male cricket songs into the small space. As the fly locates the direction of the singing male cricket and attempts to walk toward it, Jirik tracks the fly's movements.

In this experiment, which is part of the Collaborative Undergraduate Research and Inquiry (CURI) program at St. Olaf, Jirik and a team of student researchers are testing the directional hearing capabilities of the fly. Along the way, they're gaining invaluable hands-on experience in the scientific process.

“Sometimes, it's necessary to have plan B, C, and D when working with these flies,” says Jirik. “Research is hard, and it takes time and effort to solve the problems that arise. We have all learned to be more flexible and adaptable.”

That persistence and flexibility come in handy when studying a creature as tiny as *Ormia ochracea*, an acoustic parasitoid fly whose powerful hearing ability is the subject of a summer research project conducted by Assistant Professor of Biology Norman Lee in collaboration with his team of CURI students.

To study the auditory system of the *O. ochracea*, Lee and the student researchers are taking advantage of the predator-prey relationship between the flies and crickets. One might expect the crickets to be the predator and flies to be the prey. But with *O. ochracea*, says Lee, the relationship is the exact opposite.

“You have this interesting problem where male crickets advertise for female crickets by producing these attractive calling songs. But at the same time, male crickets will also attract these flies that will be deadly to them,” Lee explains. “So these male crickets are singing in the dark trying to attract female crickets, and at the same time, eavesdropping female flies need to find a host for their larvae to develop in, and they are using their sense of directional hearing to find these crickets.”

Lee explains that to survive, the flies have evolved these “fantastically cool ears” that allow them to eavesdrop on the communication signals of field crickets and to determine the direction from which the sound is traveling. In the Neural Systems and Behavior Lab, also called the Lee Lab, Lee and CURI students have homed in on the directional hearing that the *O. ochracea* has developed.

“The most interesting piece of information that I extracted this summer is that no ‘simple’ organism or system exists,” says Luis J. Almanza ’20, Lee Lab researcher and CURI participant. “Each organism possesses a new set of challenges that, in most cases, very few individuals in the world have studied. For our lab and myself, we are the pioneers, the trailblazers making way into a lane of work that quite literally no one else in the world may be doing.”

While the research is helping the research team understand how nervous systems function to mediate adaptive behavioral decisions in animals, it also has scientific, real-world implications for humans.

The ability to recognize sound patterns is common among many animals, including human beings, who rely on the patterning of sound to perceive speech and the direction from which a sound originates to determine the speaker location. “Humans find sound direction by [unconsciously] measuring the time difference between when a sound arrives at each ear,” says Lee. “Our ears are separated by enough distance that it gives our auditory system the ability to extract the location of a sound based on that time difference. We can also measure an intensity difference, so sound from one side will appear louder to my near ear than my far ear.”

Though this auditory process works well for humans and other large animals, the ears of the tiny flies in the Lee Lab are so close together that it should be physically impossible for them to determine sound direction because these time and intensity differences are so small. Yet the flies have been able to find host crickets based on their hearing ability, an ability they have gained through the process of evolution.

Lee believes that his research into *O. ochracea* hearing can be harnessed to help improve human hearing by providing engineers with insights into how the natural world has solved common hearing challenges, such as perceiving salient sound sources in the presence of natural noise. Engineers have relied on biomimicry to design miniature microphones based on *O. ochracea* ears. “These insights may provide engineers with ideas to improve how natural stimuli are converted to electrical signals and how these signals are processed by speech recognition systems to improve hearing aid technology in a directionally sensitive way”.

While the findings that come from this research are important, Lee sees additional value in students’ experience of doing real research in an undergraduate setting. “I hope that students learn a set of transferable skills that will bring them success in their future endeavors,” he says. These skills include critical thinking, effective communication, and problem solving using a scientific approach. The students are also honing their technical skills, which include computer programming, data analysis, and graphical representation of their research.

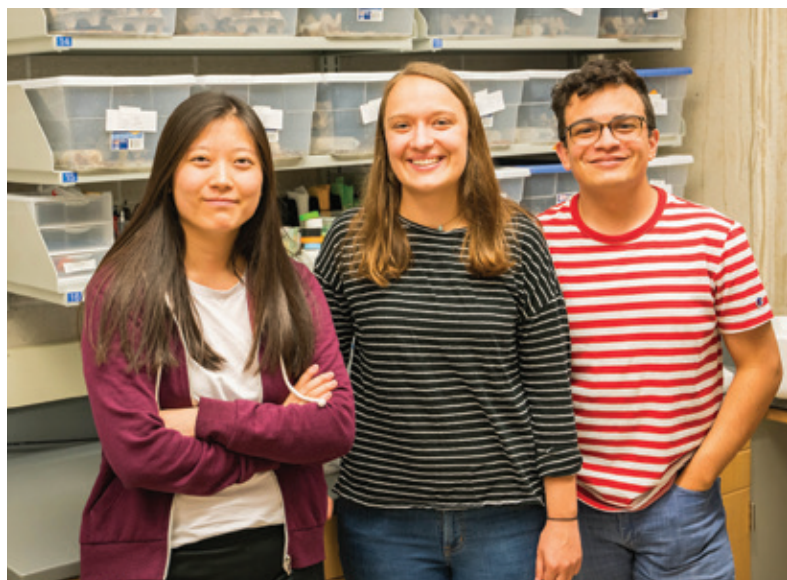
In August, the CURI student researchers attended the 56th Annual Conference of the Animal Behavior Society in Chicago, where they presented the subject of their research, “Does spatial separation of cricket songs facilitate song recognition in *Ormia ochracea*.”

“It was amazing to be able to share the information we had learned over the summer with the greater scientific community,” says Jirik, who has discovered a newfound interest in scientific research. “From an academic standpoint, my biggest takeaway this summer with the CURI program was learning that I really enjoy the scientific process of in-depth research. It also led me to realize that I am really interested in hearing, and I’m now thinking of pursuing a degree in audiology.”

For Almanza, the most rewarding part of his experience in the Lee Lab has been learning to fail in a scientific environment. “It is easy to become disappointed when an experiment you planned for months goes not as planned and yields little to no results,” he says. “However, it is in those times when you re-evaluate your situation and determine what needs to change rather than moving on.” 🦋

“My biggest takeaway with the CURI program this summer was learning that I really enjoy the scientific process of in-depth research. I’m now thinking of pursuing a degree in audiology.”

– KARI JIRIK ’20



Eunhee Jamie Cha ’21, Kari Jirik ’20, and Luis J. Almanza ’20 are among the students who play an important role in advancing Norman Lee’s ongoing research. Through opportunities with the Collaborative Undergraduate Research and Inquiry (CURI) program, students from all academic disciplines gain an in-depth understanding and hands-on experience by diving into the neuroscience behind adaptive behaviors. PHOTO BY JOHNNY GOODSON

JOHNNY GOODSON ’20 is a political science major at St. Olaf College.

NOR

TOUR REF



WAY

LECTIONS

St. Olaf Choir and St. Olaf Orchestra students brought their musical gifts to Norway earlier this summer, during a memorable two-week tour of Norway.

BY STEVEN GARCIA '20

Photos by Kyle Obermann '14, Steven Garcia '20, Nancy Bundt, and Flight Creative Media



When the St. Olaf Choir and St. Olaf Orchestra ensembles first learned about the international tour to Norway more than a year ago, the excitement began to build immediately, gaining momentum the closer we got to our departure date of May 29, 2019. I was very excited about this tour, as it would be my first time crossing the Atlantic and visiting Norway — the second home of St. Olaf College, which was founded in 1874 by Bernt Julius Muus and a small group of Norwegian immigrants.

The connection St. Olaf has had with the people and country of Norway has always been strong. Since the early 20th century, these connections have been enhanced by special events that celebrate the college's Norwegian heritage, tours by the St. Olaf Band, St. Olaf Choir, and St. Olaf Orchestra to Norway, and campus visits from various members of the Norwegian royal family, including the King and Queen of Norway.

Members of the ensembles received this information in various pre-tour meetings, which helped us understand the impact our tour would have — not only on us but on the people we would meet and perform for during our time in Norway. It also provided context for some of the amazing locations and venues we would explore and perform in. Although the tour was long and I can't fit in everything we experienced throughout the two weeks, I've assembled a few highlights that were especially memorable.



We performed in Oslo (below) for our first joint concert, at the stunning Oslo Opera House (left), a sleek, modern work of architecture that may be the most famous building in Norway.



The combined forces of the St. Olaf Choir and St. Olaf Orchestra were on display at four joint concerts in the cities of Oslo (below), Stavanger, Bergen, and Trondheim. For these concerts, we had the opportunity to perform in Norway's finest concert venues, which drew very large and enthusiastic crowds.



Just before we departed the United States, we learned that His Majesty, King Harald V of Norway (top right, with St. Olaf Choir and St. Olaf Orchestra Conductors Anton Armstrong '78 and Steven Amundson) would be attending our concert in Oslo. The King had requested a special piece of music for his entrance, and Dr. Amundson quickly composed a fanfare that included both ensembles and was ready just in time for the performance.

(Center) Oslo Opera House CEO Geir Bergkaset (far right) and Oslo Mayor Marianne Borgen welcomed King Harald V to the venue and concert, along with St. Olaf Vice President for Enrollment and College Relations Michael Kyle '85 (center), and our two conductors.

(Bottom and above) U.S. Ambassador to Norway Kenneth Braithwaite hosted a reception for the St. Olaf ensembles at the Ambassador's Residence, Villa Otium.

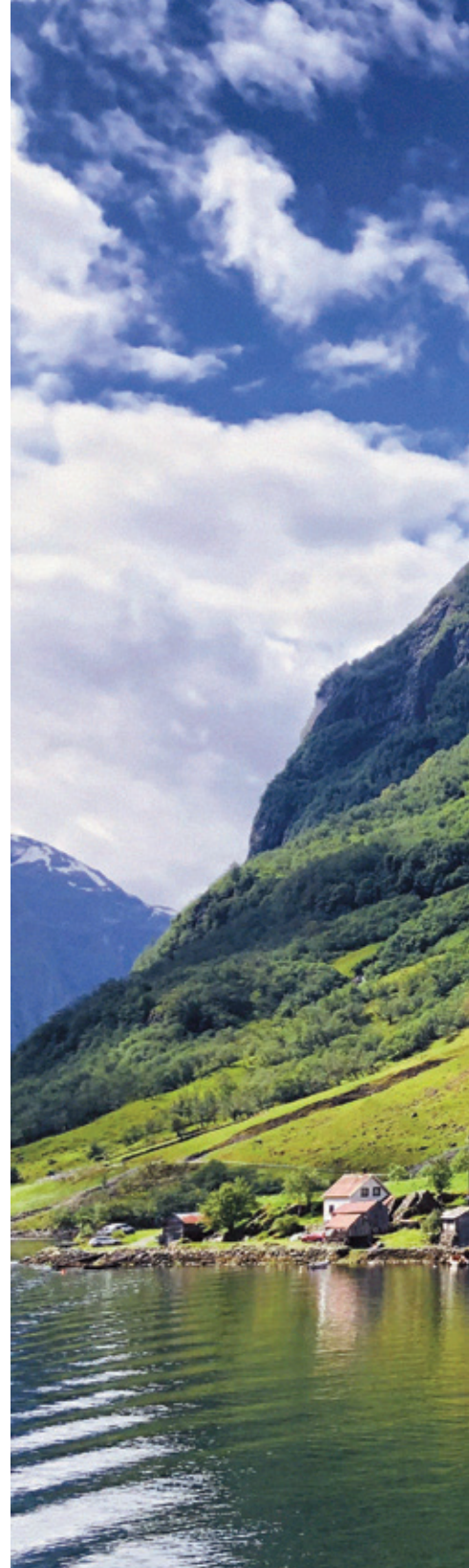


“Another memorable aspect of the tour was the spectacular beauty of Norway and the sublime beauty of the music.”

— STEVEN AMUNDSON



Norway is called the most beautiful country in the world, and I must agree! Once we passed through Bergen, the fjords got taller and more majestic. In this part of the country, roads aren't the quickest way to travel, so you must take ferries, and one of the ferries we took doubled as a fjord cruise. WOW, it was spectacular! My favorite view, though, was on top of the Loen Skylift, which took us more than 3,000 feet above Loen and gave us a breathtaking view of the fjord below.





Dyrdal, a village by the Naeroyfjord



Fløibanen, Bergen



From the very beginning of the tour, we were spoiled by the amazing food that Norway had to offer. We celebrated the start of tour at the *Ekebergrestauranten*, in the hills above Oslo, and the meal set the bar high for the food we'd be eating on the rest of the trip!



Stavanger Konserthus



Nidaros Cathedral, Trondheim

“To be able to connect with the college’s Norwegian heritage, present concerts as a cultural bridge with the people of Norway, and experience and explore new places is a rare opportunity.”

— STEVEN GARCIA '20



Overall, Norway has to be the most beautiful place I’ve ever been, and I’m glad that I was able to experience it with my colleagues in the St. Olaf Orchestra and the St. Olaf Choir. Unique experiences like this are what led me to St. Olaf, and I’ve never been more grateful for the support of the college, which enables us to bring our music to people around the country and around the world. Performing with the orchestra and choir on tour allows us to connect with others through music, one of society’s most powerful tools for bringing people together. 🦉

STEVEN GARCIA '20 plays trumpet in the St. Olaf Orchestra and the St. Olaf jazz ensembles. He will graduate with a bachelor of music in trumpet performance.



The final joint concert at Nidaros Cathedral in Trondheim was a musical highlight for many Oles, and the importance of the venue was not lost on any of the musicians. The 11th Century *Nidarosdomen* is the final resting place of King Olav II — later known as Saint Olav, the college's namesake — and its founder, Bernt Julius Muus.



"Performing for a deeply appreciative crowd in Nidaros Cathedral was a fantastic experience," says Amundson. "This, and all our performances, was a feast of heartfelt playing and singing, featuring a wide range of passion and expression. Dr. Armstrong and I are so proud of all the students, and our concert in Nidaros was the perfect conclusion to a memorable tour."

A Conversation with Alumni & Family Travel Director

Heidi Quiram

By Lynette Lamb

Kayaking through Alaska's inside passage, listening to classical music in Vienna, exploring historic temples in Bali — these are just a few of the tempting options offered by St. Olaf College's Alumni & Family Travel department. Each year, Director Heidi Quiram P'21 helps organize a dozen trips across the globe for alumni, parents, and friends of the college. We caught up with the 21-year travel office veteran in July — just after she'd returned from her sixth trip in seven months — to talk about the college's travel programs.

Q: Are non-Oles allowed on St. Olaf trips?

A: Yes! From our start in the 1970s, we've always been open to the public. This has long been one of the central tenets of our department, that we should be a front door for the college, inviting people in to experience everything St. Olaf has to offer.

Q: What considerations do you keep in mind when choosing tours?

A: We try to offer a wide variety of destinations around the globe, to spread our trips throughout the year, and to vary the lengths and price points so there's something for everyone. But our main consideration is this: can it be a program that is faculty-led and custom-designed?

Q: Are all your programs led by faculty?

A: All of them were until a few years ago. Recently, we have broken away from that model a bit with some of our programs — especially the river and ocean cruises — hosted but not designed by a St. Olaf staffer. But we strongly prefer that as many of our tours as possible be faculty-led and custom-designed. That's what set us apart early on and what we still consider a St. Olaf hallmark.

Q: How do you choose your destinations?

A: Lots of ways. Our frequent travelers might suggest that we visit a country like Bhutan, as we did in 2017. Or we look at trends and ask ourselves if we can get somewhere before it's too popular and crowded. For example, for two years in a row we took a group to Croatia, a country that is beautiful and interesting and still affordable. Another new destination for us is the Republic of Georgia, where we're headed next fall. It's a fairly unknown destination — rich in culture and history and cuisine. And soon we'll add a trip to the Indian Ocean's Vanilla Islands and Madagascar — a destination not many people have on their radar. We want our travelers to see and do and learn about things that often exist only in that one place.

Q: What future programs are you most excited about?

A: Three programs next summer, all custom-designed: a Norway multi-generational program — for children ages 3 to 12 with parents and grandparents — led by Norwegian Professor Kari Lie Dorer; a pilgrimage walking the *Camino de Santiago*, led by Spanish Professor Gwen Barnes-Karol; and a Farm and Sea to Table Japanese food traditions tour to Tokyo, Kyoto, and Niigata, led by Political Science and Asian Studies Professor Katherine Tegtmeyer Pak P '19.

Q: Many tour groups are big — up to 50 people. What size are your tours?

A: We typically need at least 12 people to keep the fee reasonable, but we cap our tours at 23 participants plus host or leaders. We've never filled a bus. With a smaller group, it's easier to move around on foot, and we believe the best way to experience a place is on your feet rather than from behind a bus window.

Q: What are some of your most popular tours?

A: Popularity often has to do more with faculty leaders than destination. People are looking for robust, educational programs, ones they can tell will be a good value. Bhutan is a great example — we filled that program in 48 hours and ended up offering a second one. Greece is always popular, so Professor Emeritus of Classics Jim May P'06, P'08 leads a group there every other year. And the Theater in London trip is in big demand — it fills up every time.

Q: Describe some challenges you've encountered.

A: On the recent Music in Norway tour with the St. Olaf Choir and St. Olaf Orchestra, the country's many narrow and winding roads meant that drive times were longer than expected. So, each day we had to review the following day's plan and determine whether it was still realistic. Frequently we had to start out earlier to reach our destinations on time. The Norway trip was also logistically daunting. We had two alumni and family groups on different itineraries starting and ending in the same cities and weaving in and out of the choir and orchestra tours. Then there are things like strikes, which break out regularly in Greece and Italy. You have to be flexible with situations like that.

Q: What were some memorable moments in Norway?

A: My group happened to be visiting Nidaros Cathedral in Trondheim when the St. Olaf Choir and Orchestra arrived to rehearse. Every visitor in the place stopped to listen to them. Also, it was moving to see parents watch their children perform in such prestigious international settings.

Q: What would most surprise people about your job?

A: Probably that I am an introvert, because traveling with a group of people 12 hours a day for 12 days in a row could exhaust even the world's biggest extrovert. But I spend most of my days in my Alumni Hall office, alone on my computer. I love that my job is both creative and organizational: each program is a puzzle — it's tough to create an itinerary with good flow that gets people around without wasted time but also allows for some spontaneity.

Q: What else should readers know about Alumni & Family Travel at St. Olaf?

A: That they should set aside their preconceived notions of group travel. This is not all white-haired people shuffling along in lockstep. Our tours take the planning pressure off you, but they are rich, educationally focused programs with free time, so you can make them into the adventure you want. 🐾

LYNETTE LAMB is a Minneapolis writer and the parent of a St. Olaf sophomore.



TOM ROSTER

Bill Etnyre '69 and
Michael Lonesome-Etnyre

PLAN TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Bill and his husband, Michael, are advancing inclusion, financial aid for underrepresented students, and student life at St. Olaf through their estate plans — it's part of Bill's 50th reunion gift.

WHAT WILL YOU MAKE POSSIBLE?

Explore your planned giving options — contact Eric Tvedt '08 in the St. Olaf Development Office at 800-776-6523 or tvedt@stolaf.edu



WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Alex Oana '92 is pursuing an entrepreneurial dream.

By Joe Kutchera '92

ALEX OANA WAS AT THE END of his credit line. He had spent the last dollar from a \$150,000 second mortgage on his house in Culver City, California, and maxed out his credit cards. All that money had gone toward his new company, Audio Test Kitchen (ATK), which he'd recently started with his co-founder, Ian Hlatky.

Their aspiration: to create a *Consumer Reports*-type of website for the \$17 billion professional audio and musical instruments industry and become the world's first unbiased online showroom for pro audio gear. In this virtual space, musicians and recording artists would be able to hear and compare the sound of pro audio gear, apples to apples.

During his 30-year career as an audio engineer and producer, Oana's mission has been to "make the world a better-sounding place." But why risk everything to make that dream a reality?

In 2015, Oana's dad passed away while Oana was working a job in pro audio sales and marketing, supporting his daughter, Veta, and his son, Orion. "With every phone call as a sales representative, I had my father's death on my mind. I felt that my time on earth is limited. I could no longer stand to spend one more minute doing a job in which I was not fully using my gifts."

While looking for other job opportunities, he found himself at a dead end. Finally, he asked himself, "If I won't take a risk on myself, why should I expect someone else to?"

Oana officially co-founded Audio Test Kitchen in Los Angeles in 2017, pitching the concept, building the team, and eventually securing \$270,000 in a "friends and family" round of financing for the company. But his passion for music started long before that.

Growing up in Mount Pleasant, Michigan, Oana remembers dabbling in music as a toddler at his local Lutheran church, where his mother played the organ. When she wasn't looking, he often crawled across the organ's bass pedals, delivering a little drama during the pastor's sermon.

It wasn't just his mother's love of music that influenced Oana. She also had an entrepreneurial spirit, spearheading innovative projects at the hospitals where she worked. Talking to her about these projects as an adult helped to nurture Oana's own interest in entrepreneurship.

But while growing up, Oana's dream was to be like one of the big-name producers he admired, the guys who appeared in the credits for hit songs and best-selling records. "I wanted to be a household name as a music engineer and producer," he remembers.

ALUMNI & FAMILY TRAVEL



Oana got his first taste of the audio equipment industry at St. Olaf, where he was a student in the Paracollege (the predecessor to the current Center for Integrative Studies), designing a personalized major called “Creative Expression through Sound, Poetry, and Video.” During his first year on the Hill, he observed some students packing up the sound equipment after a rock concert in Skoglund Gym. He asked who they worked for and discovered that being part of the sound crew was their campus job. He responded, “You mean you get *paid* for this?”

After a lot of friendly persistence, Oana got a job on the sound crew the following year. For the next three years, he ran the sound equipment in The Pause for concerts and events. “That meant that I was learning for the first time how to set up microphones and run them through a mixing board,” Oana said. “This gave me access to gear, which was like having the keys to the kingdom.”

One of the student bands Oana mixed sound for was Shark Sandwich, whose members mostly lived with Oana on the second floor of Ellingson Hall during their first year. The band’s members included his roommate, Nathan Anderson ’92, and Eric Fawcett ’92, both of whom also became entrepreneurs.

One cold winter weekend during his sophomore year, Oana recorded Shark Sandwich at The Pause, teaching himself the art of microphone setup and live recordings. He still considers it a great recording to this day.

After graduating from St. Olaf, Oana took his first shot at entrepreneurship in his early 20s, when he set up his own recording studio, CityCabin, in Minneapolis. He made hundreds of recordings and won 11 Minnesota Music Awards, including Producer of the Year, Best Indie Recording, and Best Pop Recording. He also produced, engineered, mixed, mastered, and arranged music for numerous bands formed by St. Olaf alumni, including Spymob (Fawcett and John Ostby ’92), Kid Dakota (Darren Jackson ’94), Storyhill (Johnny Hermanson ’93 and Chris Cunningham ’94), and The Olympic Hopefuls (Fawcett, Hermanson, and Jackson).

Though he accomplished much in his years running CityCabin, his early dreams of becoming a big-name producer never fully materialized. But, as in his early days trying to get a job on St. Olaf’s sound crew, he persisted and continued to pursue the vocation he felt was right for him. This pursuit eventually led him to start ATK in 2017.

In the two years since, Oana has experienced the ups and downs of getting a startup off the ground. Along with the significant financial risks, he and Hlatky have encountered some unanticipated headaches, such as bugs in the product’s software. But Oana has become very comfortable with facing and overcoming roadblocks.

“It’s really easy to get defeated,” he says. “Being an entrepreneur is a very emotional experience. You’ve got to be willing to be vulnerable.”

Oana says that when you can’t solve a particular problem alone, you have to be willing to say, “I don’t know.” You have to see the roadblock as an opportunity to enlist those you trust to help solve the problem at hand. Oana has discovered that this kind of open-minded collaboration brings its own rewards.

“The awesomeness is in the relationship between those two people who are collaborating to brainstorm and create something new together. Relationships are the most important thing,” he says. “You can’t just pull those out of thin air. Audio Test Kitchen is possible because of the network that I’ve built over the course of a 30-year career in this industry.”

ATK has recently finished testing its software and refining its website, and it’s nearly ready to launch. Early signs indicate that the company will be a sustainable business, says Oana. But no matter the outcome of ATK, Oana has stood firm in pursuing his dreams. And that’s what’s important. 🦒

JOE KUTCHERA ’92 played saxophone in Shark Sandwich and today is a freelance writer as well as the author of three books.

Whether you’re an alum, the parent of a current or former student, or a friend of the college, you are part of the Ole community. That community stays strong when we learn, explore, and broaden our perspectives together. Registration is now open for the 2020 travel programs below and more!

Borobudur and Bali | January 10–22, 2020

(Optional extension to Komodo National Park, January 22–25)
Led by Karil Kucera, Professor of Art History and Asian Studies, and Daniel Jones, Botanist and Ecologist

Ultimate Tanzania Safari | February 18–29, 2020 or February 28–March 10, 2020

Led by Donna McMillan, Associate Professor of Psychology, and Steven Bayne, Professor of Political Science, Century College

Windmills, Tulips, & Belgian Delights | April 14–22, 2020

A river cruise aboard the *Scenic Opal* | *Led by St. Olaf College President David R. Anderson ’74 and author Priscilla Paton*

3,000 Years of History and More: Greece from the Bronze Age to the Crusades | April 23–May 8, 2020

Led by Jim May, Professor Emeritus of Classics, and Donna May, Retired Teacher

Japan: Farm and Sea to Table | June 11–25, 2020

Led by Katherine Tegtmeyer Pak, Associate Professor of Political Science and Asian Studies, and Steve Pak

Northern Spain: Exploring Camino de Santiago (the Way of St. James) | June 13–28, 2020

Led by Gwen Barnes-Karol, Professor of Spanish

From Odin to Olaf: A Journey of Norwegian Culture, Fantasy & Fun for All Ages | July 5–16, 2020

Led by Kari Lie Dorer, Associate Professor of Norwegian, and Ben Dorer, Montessori Teacher

The Treasures of Georgia | Sept. 23–Oct. 6, 2020

Led by Bruce Benson, Retired St. Olaf Pastor, and Carol Benson, Retired Music Teacher

Southern Grandeur: Holiday Markets Along the Mississippi | December 6–14, 2020

A river cruise with the American Queen Steamboat Company

Many more programs are in the works.
Check stolaf.edu/travel for the latest information.

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1960s

The Community Hospital of the Monterey Peninsula has honored **Craig Christensen '60** with the 2018 Physician Recognition Award. Craig, who was the first gastroenterologist to practice on the peninsula, has been at Community Hospital since 1973. ■ **Mary B. Johnson '60**, professor emerita of nursing at St. Olaf ¹ who taught in the nursing program for 26 years until her retirement in 2004, has been honored with a Lifetime Achievement Award by the American Holistic Nursing Association. Mary, a Ph.D., R.N., AHN-BC (retired), and CHTP, has taught imagery, reflexology, Healing Touch, and relaxation techniques as well as the principles of holistic nursing in workshops for health care providers for many years. She has completed certification in Healing Touch and advanced practice in holistic nursing, is a founding member of the Minnesota Holistic Nursing Association, and serves on the board at Pathways: A Healing Center, in Minneapolis. ■ **Susan Reim '64** was honored in early July by the congregation of First Presbyterian Church of Caro (Mich.) for 40 years of service as their organist. Susan received a special plaque to commemorate the milestone. ■ **Barbara Otheim Brocker '67**, ² who taught the bell tree keyboard at the Handbell Musicians of America's National Seminar, is using her St. Olaf gifts to develop the bell tree as a solo instrument. She has published over 30 arrangements, written a manual, and performed and taught regionally, nationally, and internationally to spread the idea of the bell tree.

1970s

Cathy Larson '73 writes, "On a heritage tour of Norway through the Vesterheim Norwegian-American Museum, we experienced a royal Ole flush. ³ It was royal because it happened at Stiklestad, where King Olav II (later sainted) was mortally wounded in battle. It was a flush because we represent five consecutive classes at St. Olaf College. From left to right, we are **Rick Bogda '69**, **Greg Roverud '70**, **Ann Galvin Bogda '71**, **Carol Sundheim Roverud '72**, and **Cathy Larson '73**. ■ **Patrick Cabello Hansel '75** writes, "My wife, Luisa, and I have served as co-pastors at St. Paul's Lutheran in south Minneapolis since 2005 and have set the date for our retirement in June 2020. ⁴ St. Paul's has changed from a mostly Swedish-descent congregation to one that is predominately Latino. It's been hard since the 2016 election, but we keep on. Luisa and I have also enjoyed our second vocation as artists. We started the Semilla Center for Healing and the Arts at St. Paul's. Luisa is the artistic director, and teaches mosaics and murals (and has taken over our dining room table with mosaics!). I am the writer in residence and editor of Semilla's literary journal, *The Phoenix of Phillips*, which goes out to over 6,000 homes. And — finally — my first book of poetry was



Then & Now: 1976 Term in the Middle East | **Greg Buck '77** writes, "In 1976, our Term in the Middle East group was made up of 32 students, led by Professor Ansgar and Muriel Sovik. A picture was taken of us on an abandoned tank in the Golan Heights. Last September 29, 2018, 42 years later, 29 of the 32 students got together for a reunion in Minneapolis. That 29 of the 32 students were able to reunite 42 years later is a testament to the long-term positive influence that St. Olaf's international studies programs can have on students."



(Front, L-R): **Brad Thompson '78**, **Brad Jensen '78**, **Mark Brown '78**, Kathleen Hennessy (Vassar), **Beth Tweet Nevala '76**, **Nancy Pirsch Olson '77**, **Lehliha Paschke '77**, **Craig Hutton (Carleton)**; (row two) **Phil Ruud '77**, **Kathy Rowe Scott '77**, **Alicia Worthington '78**, **Joan Terres Stole '77**, **Lisa Nave Buck '77**, **Jim Barker '78**, **Tracy Wolf '77**, **Lauri Krouse '78**, **Roger Heegaard '76**; (row three) **Bob Rusert '76**, **Loren Davis '79**, **Jane Anglin '78**, **Tom Haugrud '78**, **Ian Smith '77**, **Jim McDonald '78**, **Peter Dion-Kindem '77**, **Kathy Sovik-Siemans '74**, **Steve Veker '78**; (back row) **Greg Buck '77**, **Leland Moe '78**, **Sarah Dille '78**

Thirteen Class of '87 Ole parents celebrate their 2019 graduates!

published this year: *The Devouring Land* (Main Street Rag Publishing). Life is good!" ■ **Mary Herrmann Hughes '76** writes, "February 19, 2019, brought five alumni together through a Cultural Connections trip led by Deanna Brown to South India. ⑤ The photo was taken at Blue Mango Trust in Bodinayakkanur, Tamil Nadu, where Dr. Bruce DeJong '81 and his wife, Tamar, live and work." Pictured (L-R): **Deanna Brown '77** (Indiana), **Kimberly McDowell '76** (Maryland), **Mary Herrmann '76** (New Mexico) and Bruce DeJong (not pictured: **Tamar Ulrich DeJong '79**).

1980s

Tom Hysell '80 and **Kim Bretheim '78** ① were formally elevated to the College of Fellows of the American Institute of Architects (AIA) on June 7, 2019. AIA Fellows are recognized with the AIA's highest membership honor for their exceptional work and contributions to architecture and society. Kim is LHB Architects' housing studio leader and is committed to sustainable and high-performance design, with over 35 years of experience. Tom is a principal at Alliance, leading large civic projects, including the Minneapolis Central Library, the Target Center renovation, and a number of U.S. and international airport projects. They are pictured with their spouses, **Susan Marie Swanson '77** and **Sue Danielson Bretheim '79**. ■ **Jay Lund '81** was honored by the Northern Star Council of the Boy Scouts of America with its 2019 Distinguished Citizen's Award. The award is presented to community leaders who provide outstanding civic service to adults and/or youth in the community. Jay is chairman and CEO of Andersen Corporation and vice chair of the St. Olaf Board of Regents. ■ **Y. Franklin Ishida '82**, director for Asia and the Pacific with the ELCA Global Mission, has the pleasure of working with a number of Oles who are on staff at the ELCA churchwide office. ② Pictured: (L-R) **Y. Franklin Ishida '82**; **Aml Mohammed '21** (summer intern, working with the ELCA World Hunger team); **Kaleb Sutherland '12** (ELCA Global Mission, program director for scholarship administration, student engagement, international leaders program); and **Rebecca Duerst '00**. ■ **Le Ann Hiddleston Finger '85** is director of tournaments and player development for the Arizona Golf Association (AGA) in Scottsdale, where she manages the tournament operations for more than 40 association golf tournaments and championships for nearly 75,000 amateur golfers in Arizona. With more than 20 years of experience in the golf industry, Le Ann has an extensive background in golf administration and golf operations, and has served as a liaison with allied golf associations for



Andrea Stephenson Komschlies '87, P '18, '19 and **Craig Komschlies '87, P '18, '19** thought it was pretty amazing to have so many children of their classmates graduating from St. Olaf this year! Pictured are: **A Elliott Abbott '19** with mom **Katy Smith Abbott '87**; **B Mark Bendickson, Jr. '19** with mom **Mimi Morrison Bendickson '87**; **C Carly Challgren '19** with mom **Margaret TenBroek Challgren '87**; **D Alison Griffin '19** with mom **Jennifer Bierman '87**; **E Logan Kinsel '19** with mom **Bridget Rodningen Wortman '87**; **F Jonathan Komschlies '19** with parents **Andrea Stephenson Komschlies '87** and **Craig Komschlies '87**; **G Morgan May '19** with parents **Renee Dirks May '90** and **Rich May '87**; **H Anna Quanbeck '19** with parents **Julianna Newstrom '87** and **Nathan Quanbeck '87**; **I Codi Shogren '19** with mom **Kari Paulson Shogren '87**; **J Hunter Smith '19** with parents **Blake Smith '88** and **Sheri Cutler Smith '87**; **K Ty Tostrud '19** with parents **Eric Tostrud '87** and **Laurie Sagedahl Tostrud '89**.

many years. In March 2019, Le Ann was inducted into the Valley High School Hall of Honor in West Des Moines, Iowa, a member of just the second class inducted and the first female alumna recognized. Le Ann served as the St. Olaf women's golf coach from 2000 to 2006. ■ **Wendy Porter '89** writes, "On April 24, 2019, I was honored to be inducted into the Hall of Fame as the 2019 Best Special Events Planner by *Minnesota Meetings + Events* magazine! ③ The event was held at the Lumber Exchange Building in Minneapolis. A big shout out to all of my friends, family, and colleagues who shared in helping me achieve this honor. Thank you!"



THE ST. OLAF CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL

DECEMBER 5-8, 2019

The annual Christmas Festival ticket pre-sale will be open to St. Olaf students, parents, faculty, staff, retirees, alumni, and donors the week of October 28. Tickets go on sale to the general public on Monday, November 4.

If you do not receive information by mid-October, please contact us at christmas-festival@stolaf.edu.

1990s

Jane Dickinson '90 was named the 2019 Diabetes Educator of the Year by the American Association of Diabetes Educators. 1 She was chosen for her work on the language of diabetes. Jane has been studying, writing, and presenting on the important role language plays for diabetics. She is working with other health care professionals to change the language in diabetes, with a goal of moving toward strengths-based, person-centered, and empowering messages." ■ **Dave Schulenberg '90** currently is the director of Affiliate Services Group for the National Ground Water Association, and in that role, he is also the executive director for five state associations focused on groundwater. These include the Minnesota Water Well Association, the Michigan Ground Water Association, the California Groundwater Association, the Montana Water Well Drillers Association, and the Illinois Association of Groundwater Professionals. Says Dave, "It keeps me moving, that's for sure!" ■ **Kristin Wolke Warehime '90** writes, "After teaching English for 20 years, returning to school for a degree in graphic design, and then working as a designer for a year, I have found my dream job: instructional designer. It's a combination of everything I love about both teaching and designing." ■ **Garrick (Rik) Olsen '91** continues to work as a family doctor in the float pool for Allina Health throughout the southeast metro area of St. Paul. He joined International Health Service on a

medical mission to Honduras in February, and this year he also became part owner of Refined Skin Medi-Spa in Rochester and Red Wing, Minn.. ■ **Erik Farseth '95** received a 2019 Artist Initiative grant from the Minnesota State Arts Board. This is his third Artist Initiative grant. ■ **Kami Griffiths '95** and **Amy Roth Kasch-Vanek '10** 2 presented at the annual Points of Light Conference, held in St. Paul, Minn. Kami, executive director and co-founder of Community Tech Network, and Amy, director of service experience for Reading & Math, Inc., discovered after their session that they had both attended St. Olaf. Their session, titled "Adventures in Developing a Virtual Training Program," was well attended by a very engaged group of volunteer managers from across the country. ■ Last spring, **Kensuke Hakoda '96** 3 earned his Ed.D. in music education from Columbia University in New York City and was promoted to professor of music at Kansas Wesleyan University, where he recently completed his 16th year of teaching and his 15th season as the music director of Salina Symphony. In June, Ken announced that he plans to retire from music and move back to his native Japan to work on "a new dream." ■ **Beth Allen '97** is attending Claremont Graduate University this fall, aiming for an M.A. in Positive Developmental Psychology and Evaluation. She writes, "While I'm doing this a little later in life than many of my classmates, I subscribe to the thought that 'it's never too late and you're not too old!'" ■ **Jill Armstrong Courtney '97**, an audio/video/social media producer and educator in Nashville, has received her Ed.S. in Educational Leadership and Administration from Lipscomb University and is now certified as a school administrator in several states. She has also been accepted as a voting member into the Recording Academy, the organization that produces the Grammys. ■ **Christine Meyer Friberg '97** launched the Twin Cities-based nonprofit She Climbs Mountains in 2017. The organization serves adult motherless daughters through monthly gatherings, workshops, and retreats. In November, the group is expanding its reach to motherless daughters aged 8-21 through Girls Rise Up, which will include a mentorship program. ■ **Nina McConigley '97** 4 has been named the Walter Jackson Bate Fellow at Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard University for the 2019-20 school year.

2000s

Jennifer Erickson '01 has received the 2019 Boston College Phi Beta Kappa Teaching Award. ■ **Corinne Ehrfurth '02** is the new owner of Urban Yoga MN, a fitness studio in Rochester, Minn. ■ **Breanne Thornton Grace '04** writes, "My first author publication in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, 'The Violence of Uncertainty: Undermining Immigrant and Refugee Health,' came out in September 2018." ■ **Amanda Johnson Wollenberg '04** has earned tenure in the Biology Department at Kalamazoo College. She has been the Herbert H. and Grace



A. Dow Assistant Professor of Biology and has now been promoted to associate professor. Amanda teaches immunology and human health, cell and molecular biology, and symbiosis and is the recipient of a 2018-22 National Science Foundation (NSF) grant. Previous awards include graduate fellowships and research exchange visits from the NSF and the National Institute of Health. ■ **Kristen Rau '07**, an assistant U.S. attorney in the Northern District of Illinois, recently worked together on a trial in Chicago with her colleague, Ernest Ling, also an assistant U.S. attorney and a Carleton College Class of '81 member. ■ **Ashley Bjork '09** earned her master's in industrial/organizational psychology from Capella University.

2010s

Maggie Burk '13 recently graduated from the Yale University Institute of Sacred Music, where she earned a master of music in choral conducting. In May, she was presented with the Robert Shaw Prize for choral conducting and the ISM Faculty Prize. This fall, she will begin the doctor of musical arts degree at the University of Michigan (Ann Arbor), studying with Eugene Rogers. ■ **Eden Ehm '13** graduated from Creighton University in May with a master's in business administration and a master of science in business intelligence and analytics. ■ **Taylor Hermundson '15** graduated from the University of Minnesota College of Veterinary Medicine as a doctor of veterinary medicine. Taylor will begin her practice at St. Francis Veterinary Clinic in Isanti, Minn., where she looks forward to treating dogs, cats, and small mammals. ■ For his year of church service prior to ordination in the ELCA, **Henry Burt '16** will serve Lutheran Campus Ministries Baltimore for the 2019-20 academic year, collaborating with students at Towson, University of Maryland Baltimore County, and Morgan State. "I hope to continue with my scholarship after graduating from Princeton Theological Seminary in May, and these universities will provide me with a great context!" ■ **Madeline Lee '16** graduated with a Ph.D. in physical therapy in April from Northwestern University and has accepted a one-year residency at Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minn. 🐾



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Skoglund Center Auditorium

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Remembering Brynhild C. Rowberg '39



Brynhild Rowberg '39 passed away on May 17, 2019, at the Care Center of the Northfield Retirement Community. She was 101 years young.

Rowberg was born on August 26, 1917, in Northfield, Minnesota, the daughter of Andrew A. and Marie C. (Rollag) Rowberg. She graduated from Northfield High School in 1935 and from St. Olaf College in 1939. Rowberg received the Distinguished Alumni Award from St. Olaf in 1967 and the Northfield

High School Distinguished Alumni Award from in 2001.

From 1939 to May 1941, Rowberg worked in Minneapolis, before moving to Washington, D.C., to become an employee of the State Department. Entering the American Foreign Service in February 1945, she was appointed to the London staff of the Office of the Political Advisor to the Commanding General for Austria. Since Austria was still in German hands, the office prepared for the eventual Allied occupation of the country. Rowberg traveled to the United Kingdom in a 90-ship convoy, which was attacked, unsuccessfully, by a U-Boat. She was in London during the last raid on the city by the Luftwaffe and during the time when V-2 rockets fell frequently.

In late March 1945, U.S. strategy changed and it was decided that Austria would be occupied by troops coming from the south, so the staff, which included Rowberg, was transferred to Allied Headquarters for the Mediterranean Theater at Caserta, Italy. There the headquarters became part of the 2600th Special Detachment, Fifth Army, which was eventually relocated to Vienna after the war.

Rowberg served in Vienna (with a brief interval in London at a meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers) until 1950, when she was transferred to the American Embassy in Prague. In 1952, she moved to the Embassy in Athens and then to Saigon in 1956. That same year, she was commissioned as a Foreign Service Officer of Career, consular officer and secretary in the diplomatic service. From 1958 to 1962, she served in the Bureau of Intelligence and Research in the State Department, leaving that position in 1962 to become American Consul in Bremen, Germany.

In 1967, she began work as political officer in the Office of Korean Affairs in the State Department. The following year, she was involved almost exclusively in the negotiations with the North Koreans that led to the release of the crew of the USS *Pueblo*, which had been captured by the North Koreans. Transferred in 1971 to the American Embassy in Taipei as deputy chief of the economic section and military assistance officer, she remained on duty there until a sudden, devastating hearing loss compelled her to retire. After living for a time in northern Virginia, she moved in 1978 to Northfield with her aged mother, for whom she was caring.

In Northfield, Rowberg served as president of the local League of Women Voters, in various capacities at St. John's Lutheran Church, and in several other organizations. She wrote the introduction to a book published by the Norwegian-American Historical Association, as well as a number of pieces for the Minnesota Historical Society. She was a speaker at the society's 2005 commemoration of the end of World War II. Rowberg was featured in the September 2006 issue of *St. Olaf Magazine*.

Rowberg is survived by several cousins.

Remembering Bruce Laingen '47

Lowell Bruce Laingen '47, former U.S. ambassador and the highest-ranking diplomat among 52 U.S. Embassy workers held hostage in Tehran, Iran, in 1979, died July 15, 2019, in Washington, D.C., at the age of 96. By all accounts, Laingen served the United States in Iran — and in so many other roles — with courage, dignity, and grace.

Laingen, the son of Norwegian farmers who grew up on a southern Minnesota farm in the dust storm days of the 1920s and '30s, attended St. Olaf from 1940 to 1943, leaving to serve in the U.S. Navy from 1943 to 1946. He graduated from St. Olaf in 1947. In 1975, Laingen received St. Olaf's Distinguished Alumni Award.

Although Laingen was widely celebrated for his cool under fire during the 14-month hostage crisis — newsreel clips at the time usually pictured him bound and blindfolded — his diplomacy-is-the-best-policy attitude was not universally shared

in U.S. military and foreign policy circles. In a 2009 *Star Tribune* interview with reporter Kevin Diaz on the 30th anniversary of the Iran hostage crisis, Laingen continued to believe that engaging with Iran diplomatically, seeking common ground, was the right approach for the United States.

"Laingen was the U.S. charge d'affaires in Tehran when the U.S. Embassy was overrun amid rising tensions over the deposed shah, Mohammed Reza Pahlavi, who had been admitted to the United States for medical treatment," wrote Diaz. "The subsequent impasse, which dominated the final year of the Carter administration, dragged on until the inauguration of President Ronald Reagan in 1981. By then, the Foshay Tower in downtown Minneapolis had been draped with a massive yellow ribbon, a giant echo of a symbol started by Laingen's wife, Penne, on the oak in their front yard. A yellow ribbon — ceramic to withstand the passage of time — still hung from the old oak tree in Laingen's front yard, a 30-year-old reminder of the Minnesota farm boy's ordeal as the highest-ranking diplomat among those held hostage in Iran for 444 days."

The original yellow ribbon that decorated the Laingens' oak tree before being replaced by the ceramic one now resides in the Library of Congress.



Bruce Laingen with former President Jimmy Carter on Jan. 21, 1981, in Wiesbaden, West Germany, where the hostages had been flown to spend a few days in a hospital after Iran released them the day before. D. GORTON/THE NEW YORK TIMES



Future Ole Rose Amouta



Future Ole Alden Wendling

Future Oles

Rebecca Hoyle George '99 and Ehab George, a daughter, Sarah Brian Miller '01 and Mary Voigt, daughters, Louisa and Beatrice Doug McGregor '03 and Christina McGregor, a daughter, Madeline Cameo Haaksma Elzinga '04 and Matthew Haaksma Elzinga '04, a son, Birch Lindsey Beal '05 and Christopher Klaus '05, a son, Benedict Colleen Collrin Glennon '05 and Michael Glennon, a son, Nolan Kate Mabuice Jaster '05 and Dane Jaster, a son, Andrew Emily Moen '06 and Jesse Lava, a son, Soren Heidi Henriksen Amouta '07 and Joe Amouta, a daughter, Rose Sara VanDemark Erie '08 and Drew Erie '08, a daughter, Johanna Christopher Rohwer '08 and Jamie Koch, a son, Jack Christopher Morgan '10 and Amber Morgan, a son, Casen Kelsey Solum Williamson '11 and Spenser Williamson, a son, John Natalie Davis Wendling '12 and Alex Wendling '12, a son, Alden Abbe Haller Holmgren '12 and Aaron Holmgren '12, a daughter, Ada

Weddings

Denise Pahlow DuBois '87 and Rick DuBois '87, July 13, 2019
 Charles Lund '93 and Krista Lund, April 28, 2019
 Cassie Noll Kopietz '98 and David Kopietz, Oct. 19, 2018
 Sarah Branton Harrison '00 and Joel Rinsema, Sept. 1, 2018
 Kyle Haemig '03 and Estelle Haemig, May 25, 2019
 Emily Moen '06 and Jesse Lava, June 23, 2018
 Jacob Sperati '06 and Christine Fagnant, April 7, 2018

Deaths

Gudrun "Margaret" Sovik Lindell '39, Northfield, Minn., May 4, 2019
 Brynhild Rowberg '39, Northfield, Minn., May 17, 2019
 Harriet "Ronnie" Ronken Lynton '41, Pittsboro, N.C., March 18, 2018
 Margaret Featherstone Ottoson '41, Lincoln, Neb., April 28, 2019
 *Norman Underdahl '41, Lincoln, Neb., June 21, 2019
 Solveig Pederson Bailey '42, Northfield, Minn., May 16, 2019
 Ruth Herman Falk '42, Winter Park, Fla., June 24, 2019
 Eleanor Roos Pierce '42, Troy, Mont., Dec. 10, 2018
 Inez "Lucille" Grong Christianson '43, Mankato, Minn., March 17, 2019
 Ruth Glenn Johnson '43, Sioux Falls, S.D., June 25, 2019
 Dorothy Wahl Soderlund '44, Milaca, Minn., March 9, 2019
 Ardys Benson Bollenbacher '45, Newtown, Pa., March 3, 2019
 Gudrun Harstad '45, Mayville, N.D., April 13, 2019

Paul Mackensen '45, Pittsburgh, April 2, 2019
 Virginia Hoover Mittag '45, Hart, Mich., March 5, 2019
 Marlys Alsaker Tengvall '45, Hopkins, Minn., April 19, 2019
 Kathryn Ebert Rendahl '46, San Juan Capistrano, Calif., March 24, 2019
 *Dolph Bezoier '47, Zumbrota, Minn., March 9, 2019
 LuVerne Morck Kuykendall '47, Richfield, Minn., April 26, 2019
 Barbara Delaney Overton '47, Rapid City, S.D., June 2, 2019
 Dorothy Briggs Sherry '47, Sag Harbor, N.Y., April 8, 2019
 Lois Olson Suek '47, Minneapolis, May 26, 2019
 Charlyne Quammen Burks '48, Ballwin, Mo., July 5, 2017
 James Christensen '48, Gurnee, Ill., June 21, 2019
 *William Dion '48, Broomfield, Colo., May 29, 2019
 Doris Johnson Guffin '48, San Diego, Feb. 23, 2018
 Solveig "Vicki" Norstog '48, Minneapolis, Feb. 26, 2019
 Lucille Haals Paulsen '48, Waterloo, Iowa, June 25, 2019
 Dorothy Hodik Raasch '48, Milwaukee, March 4, 2019
 June Reque Sweet '48, Whitewater, Wis., May 21, 2019
 *Ralph Erickson '49, Nashville, March 30, 2019
 *Francis Jeffery '49, Lakewood, Wash., Nov. 21, 2017
 *John Kildahl '49, Irvington, N.Y., June 17, 2019
 Phyllis Peterson Madson '49, Edina, Minn., March 26, 2019
 Marjorie Andersen Williams '49, Santa Ana, Calif., April 2, 2019
 Richard Arne '50, Willmar, Minn., May 27, 2019
 *Leroy Bottelson '50, West Des Moines, Iowa, Feb. 24, 2019
 *Allen Hauge '50, Osage, Iowa, April 16, 2019
 *Carlton "Jim" Olswold '50, Austin, Minn., May 16, 2019
 *Glenn Overby '50, Devils Lake, N.D., April 3, 2019
 Elizabeth Reinertson Williams '50, Rochester, Minn., June 24, 2019
 Lorraine Thompson Berg '51, Astoria, Ore., May 8, 2019
 Carol Lundring Hill '51, Hesston, Kan., March 20, 2019
 Shirley Johnson Kindem '51, Burnsville, Minn., March 24, 2019
 *Arnold Pederson '51, Starbuck, Minn., June 26, 2019
 Helene "Joan" Naglestad Buckley '52, Los Altos, Calif., March 12, 2019
 Arlette Bittle Hollister '52, Des Moines, Iowa, March 21, 2019
 Bonnie Held Koch '52, Flushing, Mich., April 10, 2018
 Borghild Kjeseth Langhough '52, Cambridge, Wis., June 11, 2019
 *Paul Lundy '52, Wallingford, Iowa, Feb. 4, 2019
 Lois Haugebak Osland '52, Washington, Mo., June 5, 2019
 Richard Ovington '52, Elburn, Ill., March 21, 2019
 Fern Olson Cole '53, Prescott, Ariz., April 9, 2019
 *Wayne Hansen '53, Hudson, Wis., June 26, 2019
 Jeane Haugen Hiott '53, York, S.C., March 6, 2019
 *Norman Larson '53, Barron, Wis., July 8, 2019
 *Thor Skeie '53, Hutchinson, Minn., April 25, 2019
 Janet Neprud Bergh '54, Gulf Shores, Ala., March 21, 2019
 *Ronald Hemstad '54, Edina, Minn., June 15, 2019
 Noel Olson '54, St. Cloud, Minn., May 9, 2019
 Carolyn Thuestad Thierfelder '54, De Kalb, Ill., Jan. 22, 2019
 Doris Wisbroecker Tufte '54, Prior Lake, Minn., Feb. 22, 2019
 Dennis Griffin '55, St. Paul, Minn., July 3, 2019
 David Vigen '55, Plymouth, Minn., May 9, 2019
 George Kelling '56, Hanover, N.H., May 15, 2019
 Gene Heglund '57, Columbia, Mo., March 10, 2019
 Robert Bardy '58, Colorado Springs, Colo., May 19, 2019
 *Wade Davick '58, Winona, Minn., June 6, 2019
 Patricia Allderdice Knottnerus '58, Great Falls, Mont., May 17, 2019
 Eugene "Craig" Proehl '58, Moorhead, Minn., March 25, 2019
 *Robert Wencil '58, Colorado Springs, Colo., April 28, 2019
 Gerald Berg '59, Lewiston, Idaho, May 12, 2019
 Signe Johnson Langlie '59, Forest Lake, Minn., March 23, 2019
 Doris Watson Palmer '59, Colome, S.D., May 30, 2019
 Edward "Jack" Ragatz '59, Stanley, Wis., March 15, 2019
 Leanne Jensen Rumery '59, Flagstaff, Ariz., May 25, 2019

Remembering Irina Walter



Retired Professor of Russian Irina Walter died of cancer on May 28, 2019. A native of St. Petersburg, Russia, Walter earned her bachelor's and master's degrees from the Leningrad State Herzen Pedagogical University, as well as a second master's degree from the University of Connecticut. She joined the St. Olaf faculty in 1986, where, for 29 years, she taught the Russian language and culture to countless students until her retirement in 2015.

Throughout her teaching career, Walter viewed education as an invitation to a journey in which she, as the teacher, was a humble guide who strived to instill in her students a love for Russian art, literature, language, and history.

"Irina was the best colleague one could hope for, and I had the pleasure of working side by side with her from my arrival at St. Olaf in 1991 until her retirement," says Russian Professor Marc Robinson. "Irina was generous with her time and with her stories of growing up in the Soviet Union. She was a devoted reader and thinker and a writer of wonderful vignettes about moments from her life. She adored and maintained deep relationships with many of her students throughout the years. Some of my fondest memories of Irina will be hearing her talk about the importance of culture to a life of worth, walking across campus while trying to remember where she parked her car, the concern she showed to our students and colleagues, her refined appreciation for beauty — whether in fashion, design, or her garden — as well as her deep and enduring intellectual curiosity."

Jean Dombrock Tewksbury '59, Wausau, Wis., April 15, 2019
 Nancy Caple Borson '62, Hermantown, Minn., April 22, 2019
 Robert Duea '62, Surprise, Ariz., June 17, 2019
 David Erickson '62, Kenyon, Minn., Feb. 25, 2019
 Stephen Greenfield '62, Saint Simons Island, Ga., April 20, 2019
 Thelma Boe Wiste '62, Black River Falls, Wis., March 13, 2019
 David Emmons '63, Edina, Minn., March 4, 2019
 Nancy Larson Olson '63, Lutsen, Minn., May 14, 2019
 Robert Schilling '63, Mesa, Ariz., July 5, 2019
 Mary Whalen Baker '64, Orangevale, Calif., March 14, 2019
 Douglas Johnson '64, San Francisco, Nov. 1, 2018
 Sonova Egge Johnstone '64, Santa Barbara, Calif., Nov. 25, 2018
 Meredith Gehrke Fragomeni '65, North Oaks, Minn., Feb. 14, 2018
 Mary Haugen Miller '65, Arlington, Va., Aug. 6, 2018
 *Russell "Russ" Boraas '66, Montpelier, Va., April 16, 2019
 *Marcus Lehman '68, Lake City, Minn., June 13, 2019
 Dennis Lundgaard '70, Edina, Minn., Feb. 28, 2017
 John Pierson '70, West Des Moines, Iowa, Oct. 4, 2017
 Stephen Cox '71, Middleville, N.J., April 6, 2019
 Patricia Cole '72, Fort Collins, Colo., May 27, 2019
 Olaf Gunderson '72, Morristown, Minn., March 17, 2019
 Charles "Scott" Massie '78, St. Louis Park, Minn., March 15, 2019
 Sharon Valentine Hatchett '81, Fridley, Minn., April 20, 2019
 Thomas Utesch '81, Worthington, Minn., April 6, 2019
 Bruce "Tab" Wilkins '82, Issaquah, Wash., March 23, 2019
 Eric Donaldson '83, Rochester, Minn., March 15, 2019
 John MacArthur '83, Rutherford, N.J., April 22, 2019
 Melissa Blaisdell-Storlie '87, Northfield, Minn., July 8, 2017
 Timothy "Tim" Fisher '87, Minneapolis, April 23, 2019
 Christopher "Chris" Peterson '89, Washington, D.C., May 19, 2019
 Marc Tellepsen '96, Houston, April 22, 2019

Remembering Dave Hauck

Longtime St. Olaf College swimming and diving coach Dave Hauck passed away on July 13, 2019. He was 87 years old.

Born and raised in Madison, Minnesota, Hauck attended Gustavus Adolphus College, where he met his future wife, Mary Lundgren. After graduating from Gustavus in 1953, he earned his master's degree in physical education at Bemidji State University, spent two years in the Army Medical Corp, and began teaching and coaching in Henderson, Minnesota. After three years in Henderson, he moved back to his hometown of Madison, where he taught and coached for eight years before coming to St. Olaf in 1966 as the men's gymnastics coach. Seven years later, in 1973, he became the men's swimming coach, building one of the most successful programs in the country. He also spent 30 seasons as an assistant football coach, 15 years as the men's and women's diving coach, nine years as the men's gymnastics coach, seven years as the men's golf coach, and six years as the softball coach.

In the pool, Hauck's teams won 41 conference championships, with the men winning 28 and the women claiming 15. His men's teams won 20 consecutive Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (MIAC) titles from 1979-80 through 1998-99; and from 1986-87 through 1996-97, he led the St. Olaf women in a run of 11 straight MIAC championships.

Under Hauck's watch, St. Olaf produced 21 NCAA Division III individual national champions and one NCAA Division III national champion relay. His men's teams scored at the NCAA Division III Swimming and Diving Championships 36 times, while the women did so on 26 occasions. Among the 21 national champions Hauck coached was his son and current St. Olaf head men's and women's swimming and diving coach, Bob Hauck '87.

During his career, Hauck was named NCAA Division III Coach of the Year three times by the College Swimming and Diving Coaches Association of America. He was also a six-time MIAC Men's Swimming Coach of the Year (2005-2007, 2011-2013) and a two-time MIAC Women's Swimming Coach of the Year (2005, 2012). All told, Hauck coached for over 120 seasons at St. Olaf and coached more than 1,500 student-athletes. He was inducted into the Athletic Hall of Fame at both St. Olaf and Gustavus, as well as the Minnesota Swimming Hall of Fame, and was given the Distinguished Alumnus Award from Gustavus. Above all, he was most honored to coach for and alongside his son, Bob.

Dave was a 53-year member of the First United Church of Christ in Northfield, where he played on the church softball team, served on various committees, and sang as a member of the choir for half a century.

Those who knew Dave best knew him for his love of the outdoors: hiking in the mountains of Montana, camping in his van with Mary, and working in his yard. His nicknames and crazy one-liners left a lasting impression. Among the many things Hauck will be remembered for are his Yogi Berra-like quotes, including "If you want to swim fast, you have to swim fast." Most of all, he was a family man — a husband, a father, and a grandfather who rarely missed an opportunity to support and cheer on his grandchildren in all of their pursuits.

Those left behind to mourn his passing include his wife of 65 years, Mary; their three children, Tad (Carol), Elizabeth Fulton (Bill), and Robert "Bob" Hauck '87 (Karna '91); as well as nine grandchildren, Jason and Sara Hauck; Emma and Maria Fulton; and Cullen, Tatum, Signe, Marcus, and Josie Hauck.



Ole Lore & Legend

BY JEFF SAUVE

WITHOUT A DOUBT, THE STORIES told at St. Olaf College's annual Homecoming and Family Weekend are as colorful as the autumn leaves. Some tales are tinged with the hue of truth, some are half-truths, and others need a little rake of research.

For instance, during the 2018 Homecoming Weekend, several alumni started a conversation about legendary football players. As their conversations swirled around feats of yesteryear, the men wondered aloud who were the greatest Ole running backs of all time? Luminaries like Ole Gunderson '72, Jim Kallas '50, and Bill Winter '62 were obvious. Even the longtime dean of men, and former hall of fame quarterback Carl "Cully" Swanson '25, was given a nod. They remembered Cully being mentioned in Ripley's *Believe It or Not!*, a popular national newspaper feature, for his then astounding passing average of 205 ½ yards per game.

However, hall of fame halfback Harry L. Newby '34 was also featured in Ripley's *Believe It or Not!*, not once but twice. Known as the "Gridiron Flash," Newby possessed Olympic sprinter speed. He zigzagged and sidestepped opponents with ease, scoring touchdowns game after game, often by long gallops. During his sophomore year in 1930, the St. Olaf football team went undefeated and was proclaimed state collegiate champions. Newby was first featured in Ripley's that fall with a blurb on how he carried the ball for touchdowns on each of his first touches in four games to start the season, playing for a total of only 16 minutes and scoring on plays of 58, 45, 35, and 75 yards.

Newby's legendary play continued after his 1934 graduation, when he played semi-professional football for several years and was touted in various newspapers as "the fastest human being playing football today." In 1939, Ripley again featured Newby, this time in football regalia, while playing for the Gogebic Panthers of Ironwood, Michigan. The *Believe It or Not!* cartoon diagrammed a dizzying run by Newby against the Minneapolis Jerseys. The caption read, "Carried the ball 265 yards in one play and failed to score by 6 inches."



ORIGINAL MOHN HALL, SITE OF "THE GREAT ICE CREAM CAPER"



HARRY NEWBY '34, THE "GRIDIRON FLASH,"
RIPLEY'S *BELIEVE IT OR NOT!*, DEC. 5, 1939

As conversation continued to center on Ole lore of yesteryear, an elderly alumna reminisced about her college days more than 60 years ago. With a mischievous lilt in her voice, she recounted how "The Great Ice Cream Caper" came to be.

The alumna, a first-year resident in the all-women's dormitory, Mohn Hall (razed in 1967), compared dorm life at the time to life in a convent. She rattled off a few house rules that caught the attention of far younger alumnae standing nearby: no dancing, no slacks, no entertaining men in their rooms, and lights out at 10:30 p.m.

Dating proved difficult at times considering the stern dormitory housemother, who inspected Mohn Hall lounge with a ruler, making sure that no visiting man stood or sat closer than a foot from any of her co-ed charges. Plus, she reminded the young women: "No public displays of affection."

After lights out, the Mohn Hall women found various approaches to studying late into the night, whether by candlelight, flashlight, or in the bathroom. And on occasion, for the pure joy of breaking the rules, "pajama parties" were convened. At one memorable nocturnal gathering, a daring idea was put forth: snitch ice cream out of the cafeteria located in Mohn Hall's basement.

Giggling, the light-footed bandits made their way unnoticed down the flight of stairs. The most agile of them climbed through the door transom and let the others in. Within minutes the freezer was accessed and several cartons of ice cream were stealthily removed to the women's upstairs lair. Upon rounding up spoons for their midnight snack, the alumna and her accomplices were astonished to find that they had not absconded with 20 pounds of mint ice cream but rather frozen asparagus. So much for the Great Ice Cream Cap, she said with a hearty laugh. "Can you believe it?" 🍦

JEFF SAUVE is a local historian and regular contributor to *St. Olaf Magazine*.

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STORMY SKIES | Old Main is never more beautiful than when a thunderstorm is rolling in. PHOTO BY MATT CLARK