

WINTER 2020

# ST. OLAF

M A G A Z I N E



ST. OLAF CHOIR CONDUCTOR  
ANTON ARMSTRONG '78



ON THE COVER

Anton Armstrong '78,  
photographed in Holland  
Hall by David Bowman

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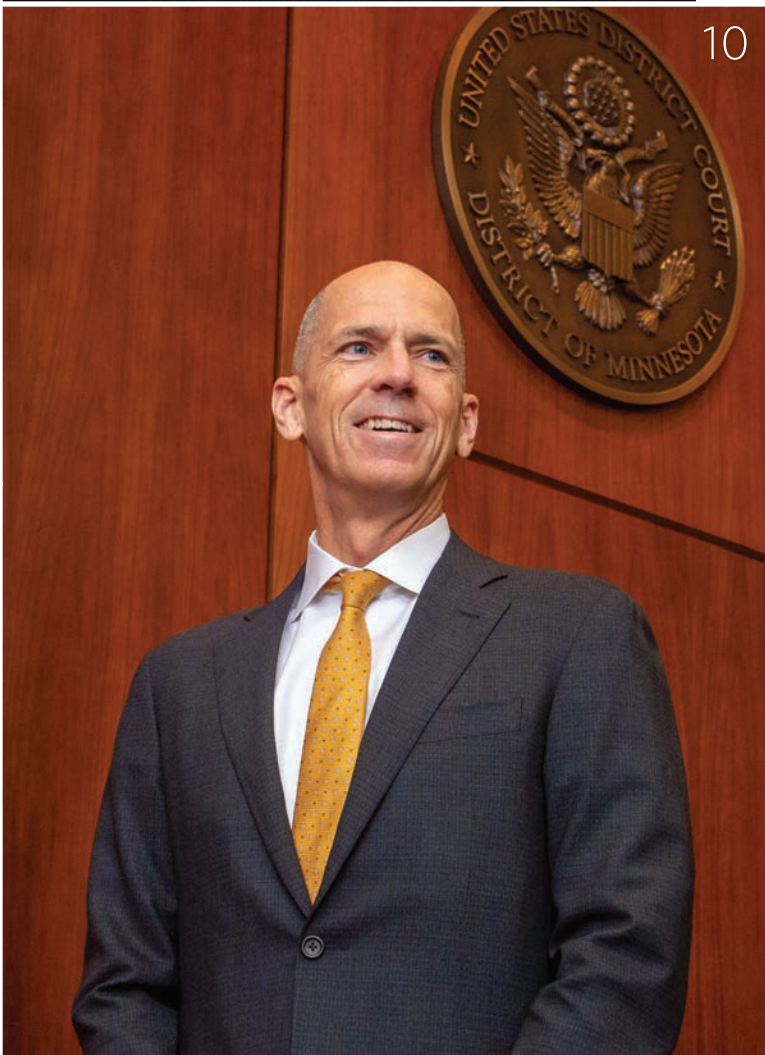


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FROM THE DESK OF  
PRESIDENT DAVID R. ANDERSON '74



*Greetings, Oles!*

Oles experience extraordinary success in applying to the nation's leading law schools, and upon graduation, they find their way into highly visible and impactful jobs, like Matt Stennes '95, vice president and chief litigation and investigations counsel for Medtronic, or the Honorable Eric Tostrud '87, U.S. District Court judge for the District of Minnesota.

Ole lawyers are working in government, at *Fortune 500* companies, in the private sector, and in environmental, civil rights, corporate, and criminal law. Recent graduates featured in this issue — Rachel Palermo '15, a student at Notre Dame Law School, and Michaela Bolden '16, a student at Columbia University Law School — represent the most recent wave of Oles headed for success.

This does not happen by accident. A rigorous liberal arts education that develops analytical and communication skills certainly contributes to this success. So does a commitment to serving others. The Piper Center for Vocation and Career introduces undergraduate Oles to Oles working in cities around the country who can open doors for them or provide other opportunities, like the Svoboda Legal Scholars Program initiated and supported by Paul Svoboda '81. Layer on top of that the character, the passion, and the work ethic of Oles, and you get the results recounted in this issue.

Where does one begin to talk about Anton Armstrong '78? *The Power of Music* in this issue gives a comprehensive review of Anton's extraordinary career on the occasion of his 30th year as conductor of the St. Olaf Choir. More than that, however, it offers moving insights into the heart of the conductor who has drawn such beautiful music out of his talented singers over the years. I hope you find as much pleasure in reading this piece as I did.

Who doesn't want some good news? If you do, you've come to the right place. As we begin the new year, this issue of the magazine closes with six reasons why we should feel optimistic about our ability as a people to address some of our biggest challenges. Oles can! Oles will!

*David R. Anderson*



UM! YAH! YAH!



Gretchen Ohlmacher '21 interned last summer at the U.S. Supreme Court in Washington, D.C. It was a perfect fit for this history and Russian major.

An internship created by Chief Justice Warren E. Burger in 1973 to record and preserve the history of the U.S. Supreme Court provided St. Olaf's 2019 Svoboda Legal Scholar Gretchen Ohlmacher with two unique opportunities last summer: she got to serve as both a curator's intern for the court and a collections management intern.

As a curator's intern, Ohlmacher promoted public understanding of the nation's highest court by sharing its history through a variety of programs; as a collections management intern, Ohlmacher assisted with cataloging the Supreme Court's myriad collections, from decorative arts to ephemera related to its justices.

"Approaching the Supreme Court on my first day as a curator's intern was awe-inspiring," she says. "Goosebumps ran down my arms as I walked across the marble courtyard to enter the building. Once I and the other new interns had arrived and checked in, our supervisor immediately whisked us away to attend the first of many non-argument sessions — when the opinions of the justices have been read, the decision of the Supreme Court goes into effect, and the decision is made public. Afterward, they encouraged us to explore the exhibits and immerse ourselves in the rich history that the Supreme Court has to offer."

A typical day included leading tours in which Ohlmacher provided visitors with the history of the building and architecture, and giving courtroom lectures in which she explained the kinds of cases that come to court, who and what can be seen on a typical oral argument day, and how cases are decided and decisions handed down. Ohlmacher enjoyed connecting with people and watching them light up with excitement as they learned more about the nation's highest court. "Whenever that small connection takes place, either during a courtroom lecture or a tour, a person's curiosity skyrockets and they engage more deeply with the world around them."

In addition to collaborating with coworkers on team-based projects and interacting with the general public, all of which was both exciting and rewarding, Ohlmacher had an opportunity to explore careers within the Department of Justice and the Federal Judicial Committee as part of her internship.

"[The internship] exposed me to several potential careers in the fields of law, education, and curation," says Ohlmacher. It also expanded her knowledge of and appreciation for the Supreme Court in particular and the court system in general. "It offered me an engaging and valuable history of the United States and a legal perspective on the issues that have taken place throughout American history. Of that history, what stands out to me the most is the role of Chief Justice John Marshall in establishing most of the court's powers that we take for granted today. During his 34 years as chief justice, Marshall established the basis of judicial review, the ability for the Supreme Court to rule any federal law that conflicts with the Constitution unconstitutional and thus render it null and void. And he also presided over *McCulloch v. Maryland*, which ruled that the Constitution did allow the federal government to establish a national bank system."

This internship is another wonderful example of alumni reaching out to help students, notes Leslie Moore '77, director of the Piper Center for Vocation and Career. Gary Matz '77, a retired lawyer and a guide at the U.S. Supreme Court, shared the opportunity with St. Olaf Regent Greg Buck '77, who in turn reached out to Piper Center staff. The alumni connection made this unique opportunity possible for Ohlmacher, who continues to broaden her education by studying in France during Interim and spring semester, where she will participate in the IES Paris/French Studies Program. 🍷







**LAW & OR**







**M**att Stennes '95 always knew he was interested in law. His interest was sparked by the simple explanation his father, an attorney, always shared about the purpose of the profession: “Lawyers help people solve problems.”

When it came time to look at colleges, Stennes sought an education that would combine the values and intellectual rigor of the liberal arts with a strong preparation for law school. He found a perfect fit in St. Olaf College.

During his years on the Hill, Stennes made use of the college’s extensive alumni network to find a legal internship in the Twin Cities, and he honed his communication skills in English classes and by writing for the college newspaper, the *Manitou Messenger*. He graduated with degrees in economics and political science before continuing on to Harvard Law School.

From there, Stennes returned to Minnesota to serve as law clerk to U.S. District Court Judge Ann D. Montgomery. After his clerkship, he moved to Washington, D.C. to work as an associate at a large national law firm. Stennes later served as a federal prosecutor in the Public Integrity Section of the

# DER

By providing students with strong writing and analytical skills, hands-on legal experience, and a supportive alumni network, St. Olaf College prepares Oles well for a career in law.

By **HARRISON CLARK '21**



U.S. Department of Justice. He then made the move back to Minnesota to work for Medtronic, a Minneapolis-based medical device company focused on biomedical engineering. He currently serves as the company’s vice president and chief litigation and investigations counsel.

Stennes’s experience illustrates the success many alumni have found in the legal field after graduating from St. Olaf.

In the last five years alone, Oles have attended nearly all of the top 20 law schools in the country. Owing to a three-way tie for 20th place, 22 schools made the cut, and St. Olaf alumni have been accepted to 20 of them.

For the 2017–18 application cycle, 35 of 37 St. Olaf graduates were accepted by one or more law schools of their choice, and 100 percent of Oles received an acceptance within three years of graduation. This acceptance rate is far above the national average of 74 percent, achieved in part due to a consistently strong performance on the Law School Admissions Test (LSAT): The critical thinking and problem-solving skills that students in all majors and disciplines hone at St. Olaf contributes to an exceptionally high outcome on the test. St. Olaf seniors have averaged a 161 on their LSATs over the last 5 years, placing them in the top 20 percent.

St. Olaf students also bring with them a rigorous liberal arts education and desire to serve others that makes them attractive to law schools. “Law schools require no particular major,” says Leslie Moore ’77, director of the Piper Center for Vocation and Career. “Apart from a good GPA and a good LSAT score, law schools are looking for students with strong writing and analytical skills — and for students who have experiences that have tested their resilience and commitment to serving others within complex social, legal, and economic frameworks.”

This commitment is one that Satveer Chaudhary ’91, an immigration lawyer and former Minnesota legislator, made during his time at St. Olaf.

Originally interested in the college as a feeder school to the University of Minnesota Medical School, Chaudhary hoped to channel his passion for helping people into a career as a doctor. But bit by bit, he fell in love with politics, on campus and beyond.

The late political science professor Charles Umbanhowar Sr. played a key role in Chaudhary’s transformation, mentoring and facilitating his burgeoning interest in politics. Chaudhary soon found himself writing for the *Manitou Messenger* and serving as Political Awareness Committee coordinator, where he worked on Get Out the Vote initiatives and got hundreds of Oles to vote despite having no polling station on campus.

“It was a political and social playing field for me at St. Olaf, and that’s what encouraged my interest in law,” Chaudhary says.

A yearlong study abroad experience at Oxford University further facilitated his interests, along with additional internships working for Senator Ted Kennedy in Washington D.C. and the 1992 presidential campaign, and he soon headed off to the University of Minnesota law school. Combining his love of law and politics, Chaudhary served in the Minnesota Legislature from 1996 to 2010, first in the Minnesota House of Representatives for four years and then in the Minnesota State Senate for a decade.

Chaudhary went on to open his own law practice as an immigration and criminal defense attorney

in Minneapolis. As someone whose parents emigrated from India, says Chaudhary, he understands the complexities of citizenship and the unique situations facing immigrants. His goal is to educate and nurture their new lives in America. “To me,” he says, “this is true counsel.”



Satveer Chaudhary ’91 was one of the speakers at an Ole Law gathering in the Twin Cities in 2016.





St. Olaf prepares students for a vocation, not simply law school. The pride and connection that Oles share even after their graduation is one of the attributes that helps St. Olaf graduates make waves in the professional world. This, paired with an excellent liberal arts curriculum, sends students into a variety of different legal fields and areas. Currently, Ole lawyers work in government offices like the U.S. Court of Appeals and Federal Communications Commission, at *Fortune 500* companies such as Accenture in Minneapolis, and in large private firms that include Mayer Brown and RM Partners Law, both based in Chicago.

Moore says that a depth of pre-law programming is one thing that sets St. Olaf apart from other schools. “St. Olaf is one of two liberal arts colleges in the nation that offers a paid internship program enabling students, as undergraduates, to participate in clinics at law schools.”

Known as the Svoboda Legal Scholars Program, this internship experience is supported by Paul Svoboda '81, a partner at the Chicago law firm Sidley Austin, who wanted to give students real-world legal experience as early as possible in their professional careers. The program enables students to perform intensive legal research and serve in a legal support role to social impact-oriented clinics at the University of Minnesota, Mitchell Hamline, the University of Iowa, the University of Wisconsin–Madison, and the University of St. Thomas Schools of Law. It has also recently included an internship at the U.S. Supreme Court in Washington, D.C.

On campus, St. Olaf prepares students for the law profession with courses such as *American Constitutional Law* and *International Law* that give them a chance to learn about topics covered in law school before they leave the Hill. In addition, the Piper Center provides students with a variety of resources and programs to help them prepare for law, such as how-to guides and post-grad opportunities, as well as one-on-one career counseling sessions that offer resume revising, interview advice, and guidance on housing and budgeting.

In October, St. Olaf pre-law students visited the downtown St. Paul office of Southern Minnesota Regional Legal Services, and also met with Federal Judge Eric Tostrud '87 in the nearby Warren E. Burger Federal Building.

PHOTO BY WILLIAM CIPOS '19





Rachel Palermo '15, photographed in the Kresge Law Library at the University of Notre Dame by Jeremy Hogan/Polaris.



St. Olaf also offers *Law and Policy Connections*, which gives students ample opportunity to explore the field before they finish their undergraduate degrees. Meeting with alumni in a variety of legal positions, students gain valuable insight into potential career paths while establishing relationships with professionals who have been in their shoes.

Rachel Palermo '15 attended an early version of the program, called Ole Law, during her time at St. Olaf and continued to make connections throughout her four years on the Hill. One of those connections was Executive Vice President and General Counsel for Holiday Companies Lynn Anderson '75, who Palermo job shadowed in an externship she created during Interim.

During the externship, Anderson introduced Palermo to a wide variety of lawyers and legal professions. "I spent each day of the month of January with one of 20 different lawyers, ranging from prosecutors to general counsel to a federal court judge — most of whom were Oles," Palermo says. She even spent a day with Matt Stennes and his legal team at Medtronic. This kind of on-the-job experience helped Palermo discern her own path as she looked toward a career in law.

Another alumna, Amy Gillespie '88, helped Palermo get her foot in the door at the U.S. Department of Justice. "Amy became a close mentor and friend," says Palermo, "and over the years, she constantly showed me the value of having a law degree in between exchanging stories of fun memories from St. Olaf. She reminded me of the importance of living a 'life of worth and service' in all things that I do." It was because of Gillespie, who recently passed away, that so many legal professionals in the Department of Justice hold Oles in high esteem and continue to hire them.

After graduating from St. Olaf, Palermo worked at the Democratic National Committee as director of women's media and then as a senior associate at the communications consulting firm SKDKnickerbocker.

Currently, Palermo is a student at the University of Notre Dame Law School, where she is an oralist on the Moot Court Board and will argue an appeal in front of the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals. She also is the president of the Women's Legal Forum, serves as a staff editor for a law journal, and works on the legal team for presidential candidate Pete Buttigieg. After she finishes her second year of law school, she will return to Faegre Baker Daniels as a summer associate, where she worked last summer and had the chance to meet many Ole lawyers.

The sense of community Palermo has found beyond the Hill will come as no surprise to most Oles. With alumni like these, it's no wonder that St. Olaf College has such a vibrant pre-law program. Extensive enough to support a variety of paths and dedicated enough to nurture mentorship and career connections, alumni meet pre-law students wherever they are in their journey.

"St. Olaf alumni were the most powerful resources who helped me discern my interests and begin my path toward becoming an attorney," says Palermo. "Amy and Lynn always taught me to pay it forward, and now that I am entering the legal field, I am thrilled to have the opportunity to help St. Olaf students interested in law. Together, Amy and Lynn opened the first doors for me into the legal profession, and I hope to hold it open for Oles who come after me." 🦁

**“St. Olaf is one of two liberal arts colleges in the nation that offers a paid internship program enabling students to participate in clinics at law schools.”**

— LESLIE MOORE '77, director of the Piper Center for Vocation and Career

HARRISON CLARK '21 is majoring in political science, music, and French at St. Olaf College.





# RAISE RISE

THE HONORABLE ERIC TOSTRUD '87, U.S. DISTRICT COURT JUDGE FOR  
THE DISTRICT OF MINNESOTA, IS GUIDED BY HIS ABIDING FAITH AND AN  
ENDURING COMMITMENT TO PUBLIC SERVICE AND THE RULE OF LAW.

By MARLA HILL HOLT '88

PHOTOGRAPHED BY TOM ROSTER

**E**RIC TOSTRUD'S FIRST JOB OUT OF LAW SCHOOL in 1990 was clerking for Judge Edward Devitt of the U.S. District Court for the District of Minnesota, the judgeship that Tostrud now holds after being appointed to the bench in 2018.

“If there is such a thing as a world-famous district judge, Edward Devitt was it,” Tostrud says. “He was a wonderful, selfless, dedicated public servant, and he taught me how to do this job.”

In 1961, Devitt penned an article for the American Bar Association, “Ten Commandments for the New Judge,” as a guide for 73 newly appointed federal judges. The commandments are still the go-to source for how judges should conduct themselves on the job, Tostrud says, and “I was lucky enough to learn from Devitt himself.” Devitt’s advice ranged from “Be prompt, be kind, and be dignified” to “Be patient,” “Don’t take yourself too seriously,” and “A lazy judge is a poor judge.”

It didn’t take long for Tostrud to realize he might someday want to do Devitt’s job.

“About a month after working for him, I thought, ‘He’s got the greatest job in the world.’” Tostrud says. “But I never thought the opportunity would come.”

It did, 28 years later.

By then, Tostrud had distinguished himself as a practicing attorney and a law professor, and he was ready to follow in the footsteps of his mentor.

...

**N**OW IN COMMAND OF HIS OWN COURTROOM, Tostrud embodies many of the principles laid out by Devitt. Sitting in his chambers in the Warren E. Burger Federal Building in downtown St. Paul, Tostrud is warm and welcoming, engaging but serious. He mulls over questions quietly before answering them, turning his head to glance at the snow falling outside the window on a cold November morning.

That thoughtfulness is a trait he has passed on to his own law clerks, says Megan Odom, an associate attorney for the firm of Ciresi Conlin who clerked for Tostrud during his first year on the bench.

“Judge Tostrud conveyed to me that some of my most valuable time is spent in thought,” Odom says. “That sounds so obvious, but as lawyers, we often have a compulsion to be constantly researching or writing or strategizing. He taught me that in order to work through a case, it’s not a waste of time to just sit and think. Doing so has helped me find the wrinkles in cases and to not rush into a decision.”

As Tostrud reminisced about his days at St. Olaf, it didn’t take long to realize that his time on the Hill shaped who he is today. He was the first in a long line of Tostruds to follow in the footsteps of his parents, Jerrol Tostrud ’60 and Alleen Christian Tostrud ’61. His sister Karen Tostrud Hoffman ’89 and brother Jon Tostrud ’91 are Oles, as are his wife, Laurie Sagedahl Tostrud ’89, and both of his children, Elsa Tostrud ’17 and Ty Tostrud ’19.

“I’d do anything to be at St. Olaf again,” says Tostrud, who majored in political science and speech and competed on the varsity golf team. “I was surrounded by people of faith who were fun, smart, and hardworking. They pushed me to be my best self.”

Lars Erdahl ’87 first met Tostrud in a speech class during sophomore year. They became friends and part of a tightknit group of guys who served as JCs in Kildahl Hall during their junior year and roomed together in Huggenvik House as seniors.

“Eric was focused and serious about academics, so we’d razz him about being so studious,” says Erdahl, an educator who has worked for the Minnesota Zoo and the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District. “Eric knew how to have fun, too, but he knew when it was time to lock himself away to get serious about schoolwork.”

“I was surrounded  
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— ERIC TOSTRUD '87



Erdahl notes that there were early indications that Tostrud might make a good lawyer.

“One of the things that St. Olaf taught us was how to argue about issues in an intelligent way,” Erdahl says. “We wouldn’t always agree, but we learned from each other. Eric was always in the mix of those smart conversations.”

Tostrud, meanwhile, was thinking he’d become a high school social studies teacher and coach, although going into law or the ministry alternated between “second and third on my list,” he says. He’d had an inkling about his future during a class on constitutional law taught by the late political science professor Charles Umbanhower Sr.

“He designed the course to be like a first-year law school course,” Tostrud says. “I liked that he had high expectations of us. I enjoyed the topic and the rigor of the class and had a sense that maybe I could survive in law school.”

Tostrud did more than survive. He started at William Mitchell College of Law in the fall of 1987 after graduating *cum laude* from St. Olaf, choosing that path because “I thought it would be easier to go another direction later rather than attend law school years down the road,” he says.

After struggling early on, studying the law became a passion for Tostrud. “Somewhere along the way, something clicked, and I really fell in love with the role law plays in society,” he says. “I gained a deeper understanding of the fact that we are a nation governed by the rule of law, not by people.”

Tostrud graduated *summa cum laude* from William Mitchell in 1990 and was admitted to the Minnesota bar that same year.

...

**A**FTER COMPLETING HIS SECOND CLERKSHIP in 1992 — with Judge George E. MacKinnon of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit — Tostrud returned to Minnesota to begin a 27-year career at the Minneapolis law firm of Lockridge Grindal Nauen. He was made a partner of the firm in 1998 and was of counsel from 2015 until his appointment to the federal bench.

Tostrud represented plaintiffs and defendants in large, complex civil litigation matters in federal courts across the country. He practiced in a variety of areas, including intellectual property, antitrust, securities, and general commercial litigation. His cases

Lars Erdahl (left) and Tostrud have remained close friends since their time at St. Olaf in the 1980s. “One of the things I most admire about Eric is his steadfastness in his relationships,” says Erdahl.



often involved claims in the areas of health care, fraud, insurance coverage, and financial services. In pro bono work, he litigated cases before the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims on behalf of disabled veterans, and provided representation and assistance in Minnesota through the Federal Bar Association *Pro Se* Project.

Judge Devitt had taught him that there are no unimportant cases, and Tostrud took that lesson to heart.

“If you’re party to a litigation, whether you’re a defendant or plaintiff in a criminal or civil case, that’s the most important thing going on in your life at the time,” he says. “As an attorney, I’m in a close relationship with my clients during a very stressful time, so it’s important to me that I’m not just writing and arguing in court. I’m counseling people, and it’s always satisfying to achieve a good result in their favor.”

In 1993, Tostrud began teaching at William Mitchell College of Law (now Mitchell Hamline School of Law) as an adjunct professor and has taught at the University of Minnesota Law School since 2011. He served on Mitchell Hamline’s Board of Trustees from 2006 to 2015, at which time he began teaching full time at the school as a distinguished practitioner in residence.

Tostrud’s areas of teaching included legal writing, the federal courts, federal jurisdiction, and complex litigation, among others.

“I’ve had to really learn the law to be able to teach it, and that has helped me immeasurably in my career,” he says. He also notes that taking a deep dive into the law presents many opportunities for debate about what the law should be. “I enjoy facilitating discussion, as well as occasionally weighing in on the issue at hand.”

Odom, Tostrud’s former law clerk, took courses on advanced civil procedure, electronic discovery, and the business of lawyering from Tostrud at Mitchell Hamline. She agrees that a careful reading of the rules of law is important to him. “He was such a good professor,” she says. “He taught me that when questions arise, I should always reread the applicable law, and to not assume I know what it says,” she says. “He has a pocket U.S. Constitution that he’ll take out and read on the airplane when he’s bored, and I think the man probably reads the rules of civil procedure for fun.”

In the fall of 2016, after two federal judgeships opened up in Minnesota, Tostrud began the long road toward a District Judge appointment by applying to two separate judicial selection committees — one established by U.S. Senators Amy Klobuchar and Al Franken and the other by U.S. Congressman Erik Paulsen ’87. All of 2017 was taken up with information gathering, interviews, committee hearings, and background checks.

“It’s an extensive political process. So much of it is beyond your control, and there are no guarantees that you’ll make it to the next step,” Tostrud says. “The best advice I received was to manage my expectations but to also not leave anything on the table. If I wanted this job, I couldn’t be shy about it.”

His efforts paid off, and in February 2018, Tostrud was nominated to the federal bench by President Donald Trump. The U.S. Senate confirmed his nomination by unanimous voice vote on September 6, and he was sworn in as U.S. District Court Judge for the District of Minnesota on September 14, 2018.

Ironically, Tostrud had taught a course about the judicial nomination process prior to going through it himself. “If I could go back, I’d say that the information in that class was a good start, but here’s how it really works,” he says with a chuckle.

Tostrud met recently with a group of St. Olaf pre-law students as part of a Twin Cities Connections program with the Piper Center for Vocation and Career.  
PHOTO BY WILLIAM CIPOS '19





In just over a year in the job, Tostrud has learned there is no typical day in the office. He has overseen many hearings in a wide variety of civil and criminal matters, such as employment and patent law disputes and police brutality cases.

“I’ve had weeks that included writing opinions in complex civil cases, hearing motions in other civil cases, and taking guilty pleas or changes of pleas in criminal cases,” Tostrud says. “Then on one Friday night, I performed the marriage ceremony of one of my law clerks. That’s an added bonus of the job.”



**T**OSTRUD REMAINS CLOSE to the Oles with whom he forged deep friendships during his time on the Hill. His closest friend and roommate for four years, Scott Jenson '87, later served in the Peace Corps in Lesotho with his wife, Barbara Kloeck, and became a tireless crusader for peace and justice around the world. Jenson was pursuing a Ph.D. in political science at the University of Wisconsin when he and Kloeck and their two young children were tragically killed in a car accident in South Africa while on vacation in 1999.

“Their deaths were very hard on all of us,” Tostrud says. “We were so young, and to lose all of them like that was just awful.” After hearing the news, he and Erdahl met at St. Olaf and wandered around campus, when Erdahl wondered “who would carry on Scott’s work?”

That question sparked an idea, and in 2001, Jenson’s family, together with Tostrud and Erdahl and their wives, created what is now known as the Scott Kloeck-Jenson Endowment for Social Impact Scholars. The fund today supports student opportunities for social entrepreneurship and public service.

“We wanted to create more Scotts,” Tostrud says. “To give students the opportunity to examine worldwide issues and challenges and to be pragmatic in figuring out ways to approach and solve those problems.”

To honor their friend, Erdahl and Tostrud have met each year on Jenson’s birthday and the anniversary of his death. “One of the things I most admire about Eric is his steadfastness in his relationships,” Erdahl says.

Tostrud is also steadfast in his faith. When asked if he has a deeply held belief or value that guides him, he answers immediately: “The Gospel is not a call to service of self, it’s a call to service of others.” His declaration recalls to mind one of Judge Devitt’s commandments for new judges: “If you believe in a Supreme Being, you should pray for divine guidance. Judges need that help more than anyone else,” though Tostrud is quick to add, “I cannot allow principles of faith or my own biases to infect my decision-making.” To this day, Tostrud remains grateful to St. Olaf and his close friends and fellow students for a life-changing education that started him down the path to his dream job. 🐉



At top, roommates Scott Jenson and Eric Tostrud, after Tostrud delivered a chapel talk during their senior year in 1987

Jenson and his immediate family (above) lost their lives in 1999 and are honored at St. Olaf with the Scott Kloeck-Jenson Endowment for Social Impact Scholars.

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

MICHAELA BOLDEN '16 IS WORKING TOWARD A CAREER PRACTICING TRANSACTIONAL LAW IN HER DREAM CITY.

# LAWYER IN TRAINING

By Marla Hill Holt '88

PHOTOGRAPHED BY MICHAEL SOFRONSKI

Growing up in St. Paul, Minnesota, Michaela Bolden '16 knew she wanted to someday live in New York City, and now, as a second-year graduate student at Columbia Law School, she's right where she wants to be.

"I love seeing all the people doing different things, always grinding, always moving. I love walking down the street and hearing ten different languages being spoken. New York just has a great multicultural feel to it," says Bolden.


This summer she'll be clerking at Jones Day, and she hopes that the firm will hire her to work in capital markets or private equity after she's earned her J.D. degree.

"I'm interested in transactional law because I want to help companies raise the capital they need to meet their goals," she says. "Corporations get a bad rap, but they're not all bad. I'd like to help put a human face to how things get done, to be the person raising awareness while writing the contracts."

Bolden says that experiences throughout her life have shaped her and guided her to a coveted spot at one of the nation's top law schools.







“I didn’t know what I wanted to do when I entered college,” she says. “I chose St. Olaf because it offered many options to explore, plus the resources and support I needed to do so.” She earned a B.A. in economics and environmental studies, was a standout thrower on the women’s track and field team, and studied abroad in Japan.

Bolden also had a fledgling interest in the law, and so to test the waters, she spent a summer as a Svoboda Legal Scholar at the University of Iowa College of Law. (The Svoboda Program is offered through the Piper Center for Vocation and Career and is supported by the generosity of Paul Svoboda ’81.) Bolden worked in the university’s Human Rights and Immigration Law Clinic, assisting with asylum petitions by helping to prepare documentation on the general conditions and state of human rights in the origin countries of asylum seekers.

But that experience didn’t quite convince Bolden she was destined for law school. “I liked the intellectual and problem-solving aspect of the work, but I wasn’t sold on immigration law. I wasn’t ready to [commit to] law school without exploring a bit more,” she says.

**“I now realize that the law impacts our day-to-day lives more than we know, and that the law also has a human aspect to it at every level.”**

The one thing she did know? New York was calling. Fred Reinke ’83, the father of a St. Olaf friend, worked at Mayer Brown and alerted Bolden to a paralegal opening at the firm the summer after her graduation. She applied, got the job, and packed her bags. During her two years at the firm, Bolden fell in love with transactional law as an assistant for an international insurance group, working on business development with attorneys in the areas of insurance, finance, and mergers and acquisitions.

“I got an insider look at a large law firm and I loved it,” Bolden says. “I realized that there’s a whole other side to law beyond litigation. With my economics background, I felt better equipped to work in business law.”

Bolden’s coworkers at Mayer Brown encouraged her to apply to law school, and after she began at Columbia, they provided her with advice gleaned from their own law school experiences.

“Law school is a hyper-pressurized environment,” she says. “They advised me to focus my energy on myself and not my classmates, to

trust my abilities, and to keep my mental health in check.”

Bolden, who says one of her role models is Michelle Obama, guards against what the former first lady calls “imposter syndrome” by reminding herself that she is exactly where she should be.

Columbia fills its cohorts with people from all walks of life and every country in the world, Bolden says, and she knows that her story is just one of many deserving ones. “We’re all here, striving to do our best, and we should be confident in that.”

Bolden’s time at Columbia has given her a more informed understanding of the world. “I’m also more open to other people’s perspectives and experiences,” she says. She is a staff editor of the *Columbia Journal of Race and Law*, which promotes scholarship around racial and ethnic justice. She is currently writing a piece that argues the need for a statute or regulation that forces administrative agencies to consider the impact that their decisions — such as where to locate a hazardous waste facility — will have on communities of color.

Bolden also has chaired Columbia’s Paul Robeson Conference and Gala, which is hosted by the Black Law Students Association and features discussions on a range of legal issues. When her schedule allows, she does pro bono legal work for Catholic Charities, interviewing immigrants who are applying for asylum so that attorneys will be better prepared to argue their cases in court. It’s similar to what she did as a Svoboda Legal Scholar at St. Olaf.

“I do a lot of listening to people’s stories, and that has opened my eyes to a lot of things I didn’t know about immigration law,” she says. “I now realize that the law impacts our day-to-day lives more than we know, and that the law also has a human aspect to it at every level — it’s not black and white, and often the answer to a legal question is ‘It depends.’”

Bolden hopes that a career in transactional law will give her the time and resources she needs to continue doing pro bono work. Eventually, she’d like to assist sustainable development funds in raising capital for renewable energy innovation — a connection that harkens back to her environmental studies major at St. Olaf.

“St. Olaf helped me grow and pushed me out of my comfort zones,” Bolden says. “I’m grateful for the support I received while I was there. I wouldn’t be where I am today without it.” 🍂

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

*THE*  
*POWER*  
*of*  
*MUSI*

*BEGINNING HIS 30TH YEAR AS CONDUCTOR OF THE  
WORLD RENOWNED ST. OLAF CHOIR, ANTON ARMSTRONG '78  
IS KEEPING HIS EYES FIXED ON THE FUTURE.*

*BY MAYA BECK*

*PHOTOGRAPHED BY DAVID BOWMAN*





C

## It was hot in Australia and New Zealand

in February 1997 when the St. Olaf Choir embarked on its first tour Down Under. Their excitement was palpable. Anton Armstrong had been conducting the choir for seven years. In addition to performing concerts in Christchurch, Auckland, Wellington, Cairns, Melbourne, Brisbane, Adelaide, and Sydney, he and his students would have time for recreational events such as museum, cultural center, and animal sanctuary visits, a sailing cruise aboard the *Søren Larsen*, excursions to the Great Barrier Reef and a New Zealand glacier, and homestays offering diverse cultural experiences. Robert “BJ” Johnson’s meticulously planned tour was designed to balance music-making with academics. Prior to leaving campus, the students had studied the cultures of the indigenous Aborigines in Australia and Maoris in New Zealand, and the culture of the early Western settlers, providing them with important social and historical contexts before they arrived in Auckland.

A particularly memorable visit to a small Maori village outside of Auckland appears in *The St. Olaf Choir: A Narrative*, by Joseph M. Shaw. As told by Bruce Benson, the St. Olaf College pastor who accompanied the choir on its tour, the Maori began the visit by performing a traditional rite of challenge and welcome for Armstrong and his choir. Well-coached for the fierce ceremony, Armstrong, as “chief” of the choir “tribe,” stood without flinching during a “threatening dance” by a local leader, eventually bending down to grasp the leader’s stick in a symbolic gesture of peace and goodwill. At the conclusion of the ceremony, the Maori requested a song from the St. Olaf Choir. Of the many songs Armstrong had chosen for the tour, one was a gentle 1907 Maori lullaby, *Hine e Hine*, newly arranged by New Zealander David Hamilton. As the American students began singing *Hine e Hine* in the Maori’s native language, the villagers’ initial wariness turned to welcome. “Thus began the continuing series of spur-of-the-moment concerts by the choir,” said Benson.

That afternoon, as the students traveled through the village shopping and harmonizing while they walked, they spontaneously gathered in the town square and began singing *Hine e Hine*. Armstrong remembers hearing the music from the gift shop he was in, watching as shoppers and clerks went outside to find the source of the music. By the time Armstrong reached his students, all 70-plus members of the choir were singing. He joined them, and while directing the final measures and bringing the impromptu performance to a close, people listened and watched with rapt attention.

A Maori woman approached him, eyes shining, asking if he was their “chief.”

Armstrong answered, “Yes, I am.”

“You know our songs,” she said. “You know our hearts and souls when you sing like that.”





IT'S BEEN 30 YEARS since anton Armstrong took the helm of the St. Olaf Choir. He is only its fourth conductor since its founding 118 years ago, and its first conductor of color. In two years, he will surpass the St. Olaf Choir's legendary founder, F. Melius Christiansen, as its longest-serving conductor. The world has changed profoundly since 1990, when Armstrong accepted the position as conductor of the choir. But what hasn't changed is the core of Armstrong's being and his belief that music is transformational and transcends language and culture, and that through the art of choral performance, messages of truth, understanding, mercy, justice, peace, hope, and love can be conveyed to a world that is crying out for these things.

ARMSTRONG'S EARLY FAMILY HISTORY began in the Caribbean: His father, William, was born and raised in Antigua, British West Indies, but came to the United States when he was 18. His mother, Esther, was born in the United States and raised in St. Thomas in the U.S. Virgin Islands before moving to Harlem as a teenager. William, a tailor, and Esther, a nurse, met in New York City, where Armstrong was born in 1956. He was their third son.

Raised on Long Island by devout Lutheran parents, Armstrong's biggest musical influence growing up was his family church in Hempstead, the Lutheran Church of the Epiphany, where Armstrong attended the parish day school. He sang his first solo, *Thou Didst Leave Thy Throne and Thy Kingly Crown*, as a kindergartner, sang in the junior choir, and played the piano by ear for morning devotions.

The church pastor, Rev. Herbert Gibney, and the church's music directors, Carl and Carol Weber, graduates of Westminster Choir College in Princeton, New Jersey, recognized and encouraged Armstrong's musical gifts, as did his parents, and it was in the church that, in addition to eight years of piano lessons, he learned to read music and studied musical literature. The Webers, who had a son the same age as Armstrong, took the boys and Armstrong's parents to a Long Island performance of the New Jersey-based American Boychoir. When the choir came on stage and opened their concert with a double chorus Renaissance piece, Armstrong recalls, "I was just blown away! I wanted to be in that choir!"

The American Boychoir School, a boarding/day school in Princeton, New Jersey, with a national reputation, offered musical vocal and instrumental training, and its professional choir toured regularly. Although William and Esther allowed Armstrong to audition for the choir, the cost of the boarding school was prohibitive. Instead, he attended its summer camp in 1968.

"Quite frankly, my mother didn't want to send her child away for somebody else to raise," Armstrong recounted. "I have two older brothers who are 10 and 14 years older than I am. She was just turning 40 when she had me, and she said, 'I didn't have a child this late only to have somebody else raise him.'"

But at age 13, a determined and focused Armstrong quietly reapplied to the boarding school without telling his parents. When he received a generous scholarship with his acceptance letter, William and Esther relented and stretched their means to make possible this opportunity that was so important to their son. What followed was a top-tier choral education for his middle school years and his first experience with national and international touring, including singing at the White House for President Richard Nixon and his family.

"My last [American Boychoir] tour was to Italy in 1971," says Armstrong. "We sang not only mass at St. Peter's but also at a private concert for Pope Paul VI at his summer residence in Castel Gandolfo. It was that experience that really set my heart and mind on a love of choral singing."

Graduating from the American Boychoir School, Armstrong would next attend the Cathedral School of St. Paul in Garden City, New York, a college-prep, residential Episcopal high school for boys. St. Paul's shared coeducational classes with its sister school, St. Mary's, but it had very limited musical offerings. Armstrong found a way to continue his musical interests, however, by playing the organ for St. Paul's and St. Mary's chapel services.



ARMSTRONG WAS 16 WHEN HIS PASTOR, Rev. Robert Hawk, told him about the St. Olaf Choir that would be performing at Lincoln Center in Manhattan as part of its annual national tour. Knowing his love for excellent choral music, his pastor naturally assumed Armstrong would be interested in this concert.

“And I said, ‘That’s very nice.’ But I had tickets to see the Moody Blues at the Garden, and I was going with a bunch of my buddies, and I had paid for these tickets out of my own money. So I said, ‘Thank you, but no thank you.’ Well, he wasn’t one to take no for an answer.” Rev. Hawk went to Armstrong’s parents, and his mother vetoed the English rock band because her son hadn’t asked for permission to see

them. She only gave him permission to see the St. Olaf Choir at Philharmonic Hall in Lincoln Center.

It was a memorable choral concert that Armstrong thoroughly enjoyed, and the image of the iconic purple robes worn by the choir stayed with him, but St. Olaf College wasn’t on his radar. A year and half later, Armstrong was ready to research colleges. In addition to music, he was interested in studying theology, anthropology, and political science. He looked at the New England Conservatory in Boston, where he could live with oldest brother, Garry, as well as Westminster Choir College. Another suggestion was that he attend Wagner College, a Lutheran liberal arts college on Staten Island, “but I was determined I was not going to go there because my pastor was the secretary of the Board of Trustees and everyone else in my church went there.” It made

Armstrong want to strike out on his own, to find a school far from New York. “That’s how I’ve been all my life,” he says. “I don’t do what everybody else does.”

Armstrong attended a Lutheran College fair on Long Island with this in mind. He had his eye on Gettysburg and Muhlenberg Colleges in Pennsylvania, although his top choice, he says, was probably Capital University in Ohio. But there were long lines of students at the booths, all waiting to speak with college representatives. Growing up in New York had left him with a distaste for traffic, so when he passed — for the third time — a college booth with no line, he accepted an invitation by the admissions officer, Bruce Moe, to learn about St. Olaf College in Minnesota.

Armstrong remembered the St. Olaf Choir and its purple robes. That was all he knew, though the college did appear to have everything he was looking for: an inclusive Lutheran tradition in which vocation was important, and a mission that incorporated a global perspective and fostered the

development of the whole person in mind, body, and spirit. Its academics were excellent, and it had a strong religion department, a thriving music department, and great choirs.

But there was still one thing Armstrong wanted to know. “How many black students go to your school?”

Moe got a glint in his eye. “You’d make one more.”

“I thought that was a really honest answer,” Armstrong says. He put St. Olaf on his list of colleges to visit.

*“We arrived in Minneapolis, and it was sunny and bright, but it was eight degrees.”*

ARMSTRONG AND HIS BROTHER GARRY drove a rental car under the cold blue skies of Minnesota, heading south over the Minnesota River toward Northfield. As Minneapolis disappeared behind them, the countryside became more rural, with vast farmlands, wetlands, and forests. They left the interstate and turned onto a country road. Looking out the window, Armstrong concluded that Garry must have gotten lost.

But eventually, after a bend in the road, St. Olaf College came into view, sitting on top of a hill. And as they drove onto the campus, Armstrong was struck by its beauty. “I’d never seen anything like it. It was like the Fortress of Solitude in my Superman comics,” he says. “Literally, everything that day was white. The ground was covered in freshly fallen snow. The trees were white with hoarfrost. The buildings were white limestone. The people were white. Even the meal that day was white. It was Swedish meatballs, mashed potatoes, and cauliflower.”

Despite all that whiteness, Armstrong found a lot to like at St. Olaf — especially the music. He met with admissions staff, interviewed with and sang for St. Olaf Choir Conductor Kenneth Jennings ’50, and although there was no time to act on Jennings’ invitation to attend a St. Olaf Choir rehearsal that evening, Armstrong stopped by Boe Memorial Chapel with his brother, where the Chapel Choir, under Robert Scholz’s direction, was rehearsing Bach’s *St. Matthew Passion*. As they left the Hill, Armstrong had the feeling he could be very happy at St. Olaf College.

“I didn’t know a whole lot about Scandinavia at that time, certainly not much about Norwegians or people of Norwegian descent,” Armstrong says. “But what I did see in the St. Olaf community — and I think it’s present here now — is people who were raised with the same values I was raised with in a black home and in my black neighborhood.” Those values, he adds, included hard work, respect for tradition, respect for others, and a belief in the centrality of God in their lives.

That sameness of spirit sealed the deal for Armstrong, and he arrived on campus as a first-year student in the fall of 1974. Armstrong first sang in the Chapel Choir and then was invited by Kenneth Jennings to join the St. Olaf Choir in his junior

THE NEW YORK TIMES  
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### 65 in St. Olaf Choir Sing Sacred Music Of Several Periods

It is rare to find a program of sacred music so intriguing as the one the St. Olaf Choir brought to Philharmonic Hall Sunday evening, and even rarer to find an amateur ensemble with such secure professionalism.

The 65 singers are undergraduates at St. Olaf's, a liberal arts college of the American Lutheran Church, in Northfield, Minn.

There have been changes in the concepts of the choir since Kenneth L. Jennings took over its direction in 1968, among them a heavier weighting of 20th-century music in the repertory, and frequent departures from the original tradition of purely a capella singing. Unaltered, however, are the admirable performing standards: the skillful blend, accurate pitch, flexible dynamics and precise diction.



year. As a music major with a focus on vocal performance, Armstrong gave voice recitals, toured with the St. Olaf Choir, participated in the annual St. Olaf Christmas Festival, studied instrumental and vocal conducting, and accepted an opportunity from Professor Alice Larsen to student-conduct the Manitou Singers his senior year, an experience that fostered his growing interest in conducting. Like all Oles, he balanced his music and academics with student activities. He ran for the Student Senate, was politically active, and co-led a series of forums on relevant racial issues as part of the student-run Black Action Committee.

But it was the friendships he forged with professors and other Oles that held the most meaning for him. “One of the blessings of my student years was making lifelong friendships. I count chief among these friendships my roommate, Ralph Johnson, and his wife, Laurie Richardson Johnson. We all sang together in the St. Olaf Choir,” he says. “I was privileged to be a groomsman in Ralph and Laurie’s wedding, godfather to their middle child, Dan, and I was delighted to serve as voice teacher to their oldest son, Matt, who also sang in the St. Olaf Choir.”

When Armstrong graduated in 1978, his friends, parents, and brothers, Garry and Billy, were all there to support him as he began the next step in his journey, graduate school.

*“When I first began conducting and teaching, I had a take-charge attitude, the notion that the young people in front of me were there to do my bidding. I see myself as a catalyst now, someone who helps bring out the best in them, as musicians and as individuals.”*

**A**FTER OBTAINING HIS MASTER’S in choral music at the University of Illinois, Armstrong accepted a teaching position at Calvin College (now Calvin University) in Grand Rapids, Michigan. It was a good fit, and over time he achieved the academic rank of associate professor of music. Three years into his tenure at Calvin, Armstrong was awarded a fellowship at Michigan State University to complete his doctoral studies; the subject of his dissertation was the St. Olaf Choir. In addition to his teaching responsibilities, Armstrong spent the next 10 years moving from strength to strength, leading the mixed voice Campus Choir, the Calvin College Alumni Choir, the Grand Rapids Symphony Chorus, and the St. Cecilia Youth Chorale. Admired and respected by colleagues and students alike, Armstrong had earned an impressive professional reputation at Calvin College and in the Grand Rapids community, when suddenly his career took an unexpected turn.

Back at St. Olaf College, the Kenneth Jennings era was coming to an end. Jennings embarked on his final concert



tour with the St. Olaf Choir, heading to the East Coast, where the choir performed in major concert halls, including the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., and Carnegie Hall in New York City. Jennings finished his 22-year tenure with a concert at Orchestra Hall in Minneapolis, after which he was honored at a private celebration for his leadership and artistry by family, friends, colleagues, and associates. Former students sent letters, writing in touching terms how Jennings affirmed and encouraged them.

Armstrong hadn’t been back to the Hill since his 10th class reunion in 1988, during which time he and two other black alumni, Ken Brown ’38 and Isaiah Harriday ’63, were interviewed about St. Olaf’s recruitment and support of minority students and faculty. It was a time of civil rights victories punctuated by tragedies and setbacks, increased connectedness and yet increased fragmentation. In *The St. Olaf Choir: A Narrative*, Shaw notes that the three men agreed that a comprehensive strategic plan would be necessary for the college to become a multicultural campus where students from diverse backgrounds could grow and thrive. Armstrong cited the positive results of such a plan that had been implemented at Calvin College.

Now St. Olaf was embarking on a search for a new conductor to take the helm of its elite choir and build on its legacy. The academic world had changed since Kenneth Jennings was chosen as the St. Olaf Choir’s third conductor. No longer would the new conductor be selected by the

current conductor, as had been the tradition when F. Melius Christiansen selected his son Olaf C. Christiansen '25 to succeed him, and Olaf Christiansen had selected Jennings. Instead, the college formed a search committee chaired by Kenneth Graber, St. Olaf music professor and Music Department chair. For the first time, St. Olaf held a national search for this key college leadership position. Finalists would be put through exhaustive daylong interviews and expected to conduct the St. Olaf Choir in three choral pieces in the presence of the search committee and assorted faculty. Graber, who had been Armstrong's academic advisor and piano professor, informed his former student that his name had been submitted for the job. From a pool of more than 60 applicants, Armstrong was one of five final candidates, and the youngest.

When the search committee chose him to succeed his mentor as the fourth conductor of the St. Olaf Choir, Armstrong couldn't believe it at first. He had a couple of questions for Graber about his appointment.

"He knew me for the good and the bad of me," he says. He asked his former advisor, "Was it a unanimous vote?"

Graber responded, "Absolutely."

"Did my race have any influence in the vote?"

Graber took a minute to craft his response. "Anton, we were looking for the finest musician who could give us a vision for the future. Your race and ethnicity we don't deny — that will be an added bonus to having you come here if you accept our offer — but ultimately you were chosen because of the quality of man and musician you are."

Armstrong could rest easy knowing that he was chosen on the virtue of merit and promise, even though his identity had not gone ignored and unseen. While he possessed many similarities to the previous St. Olaf Choir conductors — he was an alumnus and a student of his predecessor, a consummate musician, and a lifelong Lutheran — he also brought change and innovation as the first black conductor, the first conductor who was not also a composer, and the youngest conductor ever appointed.

While maintaining the rich heritage of the St. Olaf Choir, Armstrong immediately brought his personal touch, building on the legacy he inherited. While F. Melius Christiansen, who had established the ensemble's standard of excellence and controlled tone, chose spiritually profound, traditional Lutheran chorales that had their foundation in secular folk music, Olaf Christiansen added contemporary compositions, as well as more Renaissance and American folk hymns to the repertoire. Kenneth Jennings introduced larger choral works — oratorios, masses, and passions — including more 20th-century

pieces. While Jennings retained much of the choir's a cappella repertoire, he introduced the music of Asia and Eastern Europe as well as music with instrumental accompaniment, opening the door for full orchestral collaborations.

When Armstrong took the helm in 1990, he was interested in doing "musical literature that had not been done before" in addition to classical sacred music. His vast knowledge of music and his ability to articulate a vision to singers and audiences alike was destined to take the St. Olaf Choir to the next level, adding more flavor to its signature sound and further expanding its repertoire to include music of the Pacific Rim, Africa, and Latin America.

This was made all the more possible, says Armstrong, thanks to the expertise of the late BJ Johnson. Johnson, as manager of the college's music organizations, arranged domestic and international concert tours and facilitated the production of the St. Olaf Christmas Festival, for which Armstrong was its artistic director. Johnson's collaborative work with Twin Cities Public Television also ensured that the annual St. Olaf Christmas Festival and two PBS Christmas specials filmed at the Nidaros Cathedral in Trondheim, Norway, became holiday highlights.

"Throughout the years, the conductors of the St. Olaf Choir have had incredible allies in the individuals who served as managers of [the college's] music organizations. Certainly for Ken Jennings and myself, that person was BJ," says Armstrong. "BJ's visionary and innovative spirit, and his attention to detail, allowed me to make my dreams a reality. Without his support and encouragement, these last 30 years would have been far less rich."

Armstrong considers himself fortunate that this vital relationship now continues with the skillful leadership of Johnson's successor, Jean Parish '88, director of college relations for music organizations.



On a fjord ferry in Norway with BJ Johnson



*“About the time I became conductor of the St. Olaf Choir, the Berlin Wall was crumbling, the Soviet Union was dissolving, Apartheid was ending, relations with Latin America were strengthening. Suddenly an incredible amount of choral music was coming out of the Eastern European bloc, Africa, and Latin America, music that was available to sing and share. And so I tried to broaden the repertoire so that we represented the global community, the global church.”*

AWARE THAT HE WAS STANDING ON THE shoulders of giants, Armstrong began to instill in the St. Olaf Choir his own love of music. In *The St. Olaf Choir: A Narrative*, former student Ann Oldfield '92 recalled that while Armstrong's more subtle style of conducting — the raising of an eyebrow, the lift of his chin, his willingness to push them to their emotional and physical limit — was similar to that of his predecessors, his buoyant personality was unique and engaging. “His knees would be bouncing, his shoulders would be grooving ... he was never afraid to tell the choir his opinion about our posture or expression. He would say, ‘Altos, time for a little Aretha here,’ or ‘I want more Motown,’ or ‘I’m getting white M&M’s here. We need Godiva chocolate!’ ”

The young black conductor who could call for *“molto con blasto”* and characterize former St. Olaf president Lars Boe as an “ecumenical sort of dude” was generations removed from the buttoned-up dignity of F. Melius Christiansen.

Armstrong soon won the approval of members of the St. Olaf Choir, his St. Olaf colleagues and alumni, and audiences who flocked to concert halls and churches to hear the choir. As the choir toured and performed, their expanding repertoire included choral pieces from different countries and sung in different languages. In continuing to develop a more global, multicultural program, Armstrong used the work of younger composers in addition to the familiar folk tunes, Norwegian music, and anthems composed by the Christiansens and Jennings. “The choir’s palate is broader and more colorful, retaining its characteristic sound while adding a lot of spice,” he explained. But there were critics who were unhappy with Armstrong and his style.

Because a cappella sacred music is such a tradition-rich genre, its admirers tend to be attentive to any shifts in style or quality. Conductors, performers, and composers must balance keeping the practice contemporary with preserving its authenticity. Armstrong describes his balancing act as “giving honor and homage to the legacy we’ve built while opening new doors and welcoming new ways of expressing beauty and art beyond the Western European canon.” One of his



With André and Portia Thomas at Florida State University

changes was to include African American concert spirituals in each program.

The changes he brought were not always viewed favorably, and these criticisms were sometimes combined with criticisms of Armstrong's teaching background or his race. Because of his experience with the St. Cecilia Youth Chorale, some thought his experience was primarily with conducting children, which led to the remark that he didn't have the qualifications to lead one of the finest mixed college choirs in the country. Others took umbrage at a black man leading the choir, and shared their anger via hate mail. Anonymous letters exhorted Armstrong to “take your music someplace where it's wanted and give us our choir back.” Another warned St. Olaf President Mel George that “appointing someone like Armstrong would send the quality of [St. Olaf's] music program the way of the Chicago public schools.” At least one letter had a swastika on the outside and a picture of Hitler inside, demonstrating that no community is immune to prejudice.

André Thomas, composer, conductor, and professor emeritus of choral music education at Florida State University, has been one of Armstrong's closest friends since their graduate school years at the University of Illinois. Thomas attended Armstrong's first home concert in February 1991 following the choir's national tour. He was very much aware of some of the negative feedback his good friend had received since his appointment, and Thomas felt that because of it, it was all the more important that Armstrong had the full support of the college, the choir, and his colleagues.

“The St. Olaf community has always been a loving community,” Armstrong says. “It supported me and others who strive to bring love and diversity to this community. An important focus of my current work, especially as a member of the St. Olaf Council for Equity and Inclusion, is to create a space at the college where all feel that they belong. I have a powerful weapon against hate in these young souls and their beautiful voices. So as long as I'm in this position and God gives me life to carry on, we'll be bringing a message of hope, compassion, and love.”



The St. Olaf Choir's winter 2019 home concert in Boe Memorial Chapel  
PHOTO BY STEVEN GARCIA '20











*“Body, mind, spirit, voice — it takes the whole person to sing and rejoice!”*

ARMSTRONG CREDITS HELEN KEMP, a professor emerita of voice and church music at Westminster Choir College in Princeton, New Jersey, as being one of the most influential people of his life. Kemp, whom he met when he was 22 years old, shaped the way he viewed his vocation as a vocal music educator and conductor. “She was instrumental in helping me form my understanding of being a servant-artist-teacher,” he says.

The mantra Kemp shared with him so long ago resulted in Armstrong’s aim to nurture young musicians holistically in the four dimensions of “body, mind, spirit, and voice.” He does this whether in his role as conductor of the St. Olaf Choir, artistic director of the St. Olaf Christmas Festival, or the Tosdal Professor of Music at St. Olaf, where he teaches vocal pedagogy and leads classes and performance studies in voice. Armstrong has influenced thousands of singers through his work as a conductor, a teacher, and a teacher of teachers. He also provides choirs with new music as music editor of the Anton Armstrong Multicultural Series of Earthsong Publications and as co-editor (with Professor Emeritus of Music John Ferguson) of the St. Olaf Choral Series, published by Augsburg Fortress Publishers.

These collaborations and connections are a way to ensure that the music Armstrong helps create — with its powerful message of faith and hope — has a ripple effect that reaches beyond the boundaries of St. Olaf College and its choir. His dedication to others is a constant.

“Entertainment is fine in its own right, but I want to go beyond that,” he says. “I hope that the music that we share with our audiences transforms those who perform it and who hear it to become more compassionate, more caring, more loving, more hopeful in a world that wants to destroy hope.”

Those who know Armstrong describe him as a giving, loving, and inspiring teacher and person. André Thomas notes that some of Armstrong’s greatest talents as a conductor tie in with his greatest talent as a person: he advocates for young and promising musicians and composers and interprets all work with individualized attention and care, just as he offers individualized support and care for the students he works with. “His strength lies in eliciting the best of other people.” Thomas says, “Not all conductors can do that. Conducting the St. Olaf Choir has been his dream for 30 years, and he’s mastered his dream.”



*“The power of music to make a difference, whether at St. Olaf College or in the world, should not be underestimated. [In the choir,] we have a lot of political views, we have a lot of religious beliefs. But we put aside what might divide us, because when you do choral singing, you have to listen to the people around you. Music helps us find the common good, find the unison, and find the harmony.”*

ARMSTRONG'S INFLUENCE EXTENDS far wider than the Hill St. Olaf sits on, touching the international world of choral music in locations as diverse as Scandinavia, Latin America, the Middle East, the Pacific Rim, Central Europe, to name a few. In addition to touring new corners of the globe with the St. Olaf Choir, he has shared his choral knowledge and conducting prowess as guest conductor for top international choirs and choral festivals, including the Oregon Bach Festival, founded by the German choral conductor Helmuth Rilling and choral conductor Royce Saltzman.

Invited by Rilling and Saltzman to join them in the pursuit of their dream festival, Armstrong has served as director of the Oregon Bach Festival's Stangeland Family Youth Choral Academy since its inception in 1998, providing instruction and guidance to more than 1200 young singers. “Out of this program have come dozens of students who selected St. Olaf as their college,” says Armstrong, who received the festival's highest honor, the Saltzman Award, in 2013.

“He is more than a conductor,” said Royce Saltzman, the festival's founding executive director, when Armstrong received the award. “He has mentored these young people in a way that has changed lives and molded them into outstanding citizens.”

In recent years Armstrong has been invited to conduct some of the leading ensembles in the United States, including the Tabernacle Choir and Orchestra at Temple Square, the Phoenix Chorale, the Vocal Arts Ensemble of Cincinnati, and the Houston Chamber Choir. Internationally, Armstrong has guest-conducted the Formosa Singers of Taiwan and the Oman-based American International School of Muscat's Festival of Choirs, the Israel-based Zimriya World Assembly of Choirs, the World Youth Choir, and the Republic of Korea's Jeju Island International Choir Festival and Symposium where, for the third time, he guest-conducted the acclaimed Ansan City Choir. He served as a member of the Choral Jury for the first Tokyo International Choir Competition in Japan and has been involved with the World Symposium on Choral

*“I hope that the music we share with our audiences transforms those who perform it and who hear it to become more compassionate, more caring, more loving, more hopeful in a world that wants to destroy hope.”*



Music in its various forms and settings, teaching masterclasses as well as serving on its artistic committee. His work never ends: he conducted the Indonesia Youth Choir last summer and will be in the United Kingdom for the Cambridge Summer Singing Week in 2020, as well as returning to serve on the Choral Jury for the Busan Choral Festival in Busan, South Korea.

One result of his prolific work is that he has been able to build long-lasting relationships, particularly with the people of Norway, including Anita Brevik, conductor of the Nidaros Cathedral Girls' Choir, and Rev. Knut Brakstad, private secretary to His Majesty King Harald V. Armstrong has conducted the St. Olaf Choir before the Norwegian Royal Family four times, enough to have had a few conversations with King Harald V and Queen Sonja of Norway, who are "very down-to-earth people, gracious and inquisitive about others, curious about St. Olaf."

Armstrong sees these international tours as a way to live the values of St. Olaf College, particularly the values of excellence, inclusion, and global citizenship. And "while we can't always speak the same language," he says, "we can always sing together."

*"We seek to be a transforming force in society through choral performance, bringing understanding, mercy, justice, peace, and hope to a world that desperately cries out for these things."*

ARMSTRONG HAS HUMBLY DESCRIBED himself as a shepherd of others, deflecting praise to honor his colleagues and former mentors. He cites those who have made a deep and lasting impression on his life, including choral colleagues Robert Scholz, John Ferguson, Sigrid Johnson, Christopher Aspaas, James Bobb, Mark Stover, Therees Hibbard, and Tesfa Wondemagegnehu. And too, "For these past 30 years, my life has been enriched by my wonderful friend and colleague Steven Amundson, who conducts the St. Olaf Orchestra. I have been fortunate to be at St. Olaf and to have incredible colleagues and students who push me to be my best self," he says.

His students have always seemed to understand the depth of his commitment to others and have extended that care in turn even when he was his most vulnerable self. On February 13, 2007, Armstrong's beloved mother, Esther, passed away. The choir had just returned from its domestic tour, and Armstrong was about to leave again to conduct

the Texas All-State Choir. He had just received Baylor University's Robert Frost Cherry Award for Great Teaching and would be teaching one of the country's greatest all-state choirs as a visiting conductor for a semester.

But there he was, on the day before his scheduled trip, doing the heart-wrenching work of making his mother's funeral arrangements. He had no time to grieve.

That night, he received a call from BJ Johnson. "The students really want to see you," Johnson said.

"Bob, I'm really emotionally raw right now. I can't," said Armstrong, who had already said his goodbyes to the choir, knowing he wouldn't see them again for another six months.

Johnson insisted. "Anton, they *need* to see you."

Relenting, Armstrong went with Johnson to the rehearsal room in Christiansen Hall of Music. The students asked Armstrong to sit in a chair set in the middle of the room, and they surrounded him for a laying on of hands while singing *Abide with Me*, a hymn that Armstrong loved. Knowing what the hymn meant to their conductor, Luke Warren '07, a senior member of the choir and bass section leader, had taught it to the new members so that they could all sing together.

"They sent me home with the strength to say goodbye to my mother," Armstrong remembers. "That moment is as powerful to me as those standing ovations at the national American Choral Directors Association conferences, singing in front of the president of the United States, or performing before the Norwegian Royal Family. That was so touching and meaningful to me."

Today, as audiences listen to the music of the St. Olaf Choir in churches and gothic cathedrals, in school auditoriums and in concert halls, but also in live concerts streamed on electronic devices big and small, on computers and on television, Armstrong is confident that the choir will remain at the forefront of choral singing.

"Maybe the strongest aspect of our Lutheran tradition at St. Olaf is that we still believe in grace. And that is what I try to reflect in the programming of the St. Olaf Choir. We're all on a faith journey. We try to offer not a didactic way of thinking about God, but to invite people into a musical conversation where thoughts and feelings can be explored — where they can see a God of love, a God of hope. Still small voices and burning bushes don't seem to work anymore. But when the St. Olaf Choir begins to sing, when the chords we've struggled with finally lock and the music soars, God is there." 🦉

MAYA BECK is a Twin Cities freelance writer.



*“We are constantly examining repertoire from a global perspective, but the core of our being is still a proclamation of the Christian Gospel — a message of faith, love, and truth. I want the power of music — that Spirit — to transform those who perform and those who will hear the message. For me, that is a very powerful reason for doing what we do.”*



# EVERYTHING is going to be OKAY

Take it from the experts: our future is bright!  
Here are six reasons for optimism.

**By Erin Peterson**

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**T**o hear it from the prime-time newscasters, our world is in dire shape. Our digital privacy? Nonexistent. Our citizens? An aging economic burden. Don't get us started on the climate. And yet...

And yet, when we asked alumni and faculty experts in those exact fields about the future they saw, they shared a more nuanced view. Behind all of those bad headlines were sparks of promising change, heartening trends, and yes, even a few reasons for optimism.

In the following pages, we share what's making St. Olaf experts look ahead with hope.

ILLUSTRATION BY ROBERT NEUBECKER/THEISPOT







**REASON FOR OPTIMISM**  
**Our aging population is the result of good investments — and it's our secret superpower.**



**SOME CALL IT A SILVER TSUNAMI.** Others call it a demographic time bomb. The reality is that our population as a whole is getting older. We're living longer, and we're not having as many kids as we did in the past.

While economists fret about the implications of this shift on everything from Social Security to Medicare, Beth Truesdale '97, a sociologist and research associate for the Harvard Center for Population and Development Studies, says the bleak headlines sidestep a larger and far more important truth. "We overlook what a monumental accomplishment aging societies actually are," she says. "We overlook how very fortunate all of us are to be living right now."

American babies born in 1880, for example, had an average lifespan of 40 years. A baby born today, by contrast, will likely live to nearly 80. What does she credit for this doubling? Truesdale says we can look to the way public and private systems have worked together to make vast strides in areas such as public health, nutrition, and education.

At the same time, birthrates have plummeted. As late as the 1950s, the number of children being born per woman in the United States was about three. Today, that number hovers below two. What's the cause? Truesdale notes that birthrates tend to fall in tandem with infant mortality rates. "People think, 'My children are more likely to grow up to become adults.' And then they start having fewer babies."

"People are able to contribute economically if they're able to work longer, but also they're able to contribute to their communities as volunteers and as citizens for a longer time."

— BETH TRUESDALE '97

While there's no question that there are costs to an aging society, Truesdale says the advantages are huge, and we're just beginning to harness them. "People are able to contribute economically if they're able to work longer, but also they're able to contribute to their communities as volunteers and as citizens for a longer time," she says. "Often people have terrific skills that they are bringing as a result of lifelong experience. That's an enormous resource for communities and for the United States as a whole to be able to tap."



**FOR YEARS, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR** of Practice in Biology Diane Angell felt like she was fighting an unwinnable battle. She had spent decades teaching her students about climate change, but the lessons she was sharing in the classroom weren't ones that seemed to resonate much beyond it.

“We would look at the statistics of people in the United States who believed that the climate was changing, and that number didn't really budge for about 15 years,” she says.

And then, suddenly, it did. Over the past four or five years — as people began experiencing extreme weather events, from hurricanes to fires to Minnesota's increasingly soggy seasons — Angell saw that scientists' messages were finally sinking in. According to *Climate Change in the American Mind* (Yale University and George Mason University: Yale Program on Climate Change Communication), today 73 percent of people believe climate change is happening, significantly higher than the 57 percent who believed the same in 2010.

That shift in public opinion is essential, says Angell, because you can't fix a problem that you don't believe you have. “The science was done a long time ago, but I think scientists understand now that we can't do our research in isolation anymore. We need to bring it into the public realm and have real conversations with our communities.”

Megan Behnke '16, a biogeochemist and Ph.D. candidate at Florida State University, adds that this shift in public opinion has carried with it a level of activism she finds inspiring. Many states are working to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions in ways consistent with the Paris Agreement, for example. In her hometown of Juneau, Alaska, a group of concerned citizens started Renewable Juneau, a grassroots organization that seeks to reduce fossil fuel emissions by 80 percent and has created a local carbon offset program.

“There are hundreds of examples of ordinary people saying, ‘I'm going to start fixing this myself,’ ” Behnke says. “And grassroots change like that is the most effective way to change how our society interacts with its environment.”

Such work is important because, despite public proclamations to the contrary, it's never too late to make real change. While there are some important thresholds that scientists worry about — for example, when we reach certain levels of carbon dioxide emissions, the result may be less like walking down the climate hill and more like falling off of a climate cliff — Behnke says that shouldn't stop us from taking action. “Even if you fall off a cliff, you wind your way back. You find a ladder, and you work your way back to the top of the cliff.”

Climate change has often felt like nothing but bad news, but Behnke says the shifts she sees are worth being optimistic about. “Yes, climate change can be scary. But as a society, I think we're finally starting to ask, ‘What are we going to do about it?’ ”

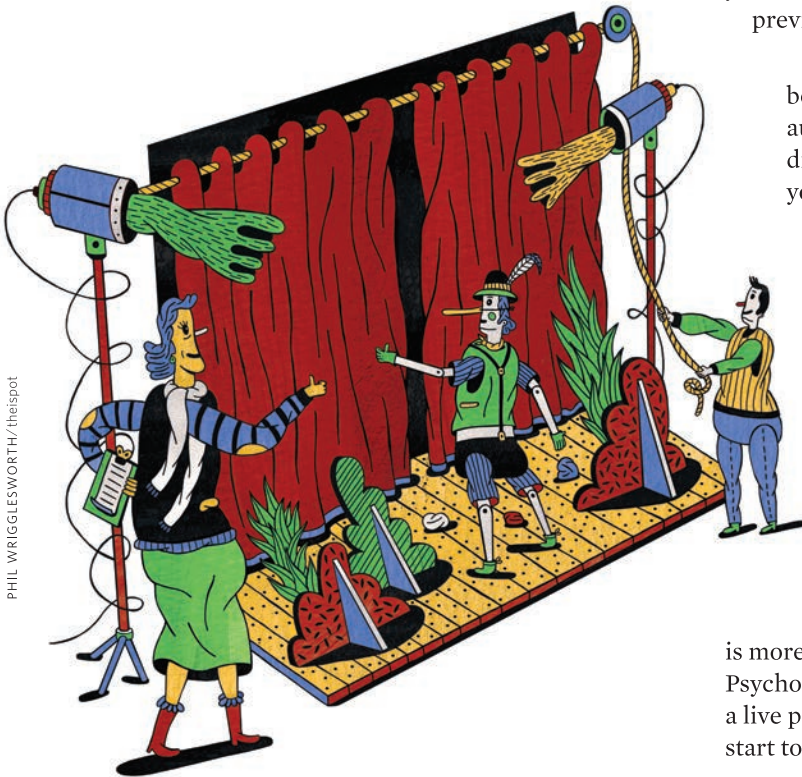
**REASON FOR OPTIMISM**  
**We've accepted the reality of climate change, and it's not yet too late to change course.**



DAN PAGE/theisport

## REASON FOR OPTIMISM

### We still appreciate the value of live performance.



PHIL WRIGGLESWORTH/theispot

**WE LIVE IN THE AGE OF STREAMING** services: first Netflix, Hulu, and Amazon; now Disney+, Apple+, and Peacock. With so much incredible programming available to us for the price of a couple coffees (and no further away than our laptops), is live theater still relevant?

The numbers resoundingly confirm theater's abiding popularity — and the Jungle Theater's artistic director, Sarah Rasmussen '01, says attendees' increasing sophistication about the medium's possibilities make her as optimistic as she's ever been. "People do engage in a meditative space here. They turn off their phones. They're together, in community with each other. It feels ancient in a way, and it's also hopeful."

The Jungle is doing a booming business these days, a trend that mirrors the industry as a whole: a study published in 2018 by the National Endowment for the Arts found that the share of adults who attended visual or performing arts activities had climbed 3.6 percentage points since 2012; last year, Broadway's attendance was up 9.5 percent from the previous season.

Rasmussen says attendees understand the value of being in the same space as the performers and other audience members, which leads to a fundamentally different experience from watching a screen by yourself. "Do I laugh at something I see at home alone on my laptop? Sometimes," Rasmussen says. "But being in an audience, someone will start laughing, and that will make *me* laugh. There's a different energy, a different sense of listening."

That laughter is empathy in action — and theater can evoke it in larger ways: When theater brings up something challenging or uncomfortable, audience members can't just turn away. Not only must they engage with an idea, but they experience others in the room doing the same. "You listen with a sense of curiosity: what is the person next to you thinking about this?" That sense of community is more than mental. Research led by the UCL Division of Psychology and Language Sciences has shown that during a live performance, audience members' heartbeats actually start to beat together.

In what can feel like an increasingly divided world, developing that sense of connection, even with those who are very different from us, is a worthy pursuit. Theatergoers understand that. And it's why those rising numbers are valuable well beyond the dollars and cents. "Being intentional about spaces where we can come together, where we can be surprised, and where we can both connect more deeply to ourselves and each other, that's important," says Rasmussen. "I think it's more necessary than ever."



## REASON FOR OPTIMISM Individuals are getting significantly more "security literate."

**PLENTY OF HACKERS HAVE FOUND** the path to our personal information: Yahoo, Equifax, and Target have all been breached in recent years, spilling our confidential information to just about anyone who wants it. So it may come as a surprise to some that there *is* someone worth trusting these days: yourself.

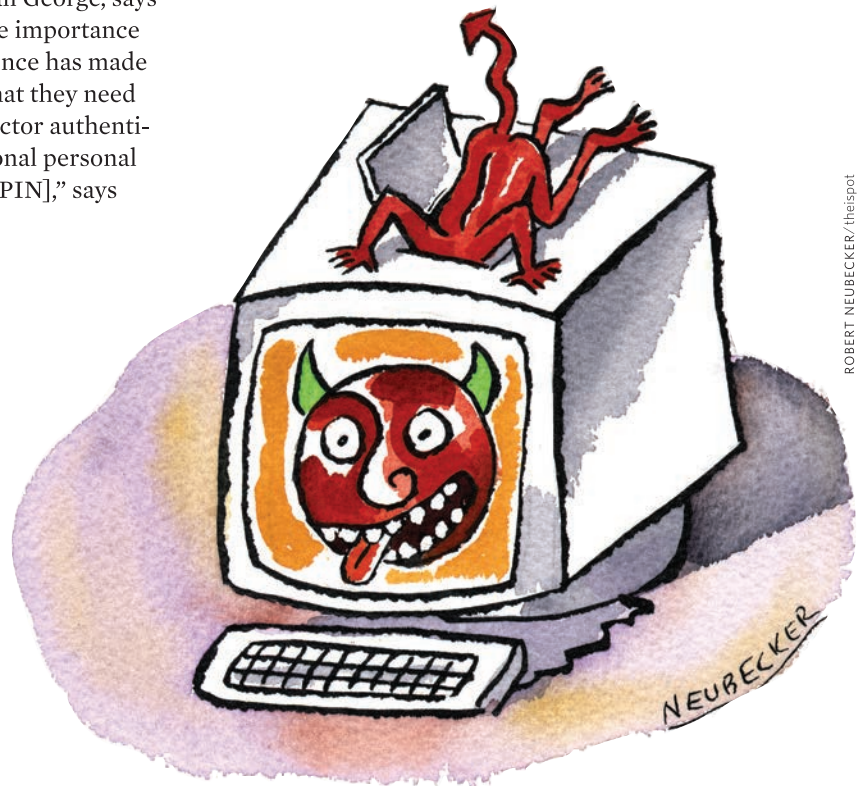
St. Olaf's information security officer, Kendall George, says that a combination of better education about the importance of security and perhaps some hard-won experience has made us all a little savvier. "People understand now that they need a stronger password. They've adapted to two-factor authentication [a combination of a password and additional personal verification, such as a fingerprint or a one-time PIN]," says George. "I don't really hear grumbling about it."

It's not just that we're no longer being duped by the story of the Nigerian prince who promises a big payoff. It's that we're bringing a more appropriate level of skepticism to unexpected emails in our inbox.

Even more than that, people are getting smarter about suspicious emails. According to the highly regarded *Verizon Data Breach Investigations Report*, click-through rates on phishing simulations plunged from 24 percent to 3 percent in just seven years.

It's not just that we're no longer being duped by the story of the Nigerian prince who promises a big payoff. It's that we're bringing a more appropriate level of skepticism to unexpected emails in our inbox. "People are less likely to click [links] or open attachments when something looks 'phishy,'" George says. "They're not falling for messages that look suspicious."

So, while the bad guys might never give up, we can at least know that these days, we're not our own worst enemy. "Education efforts are working," says Kendall. "And that's why that trend is moving in the right direction."



ROBERT NEUBECKER/theispost

## REASON FOR OPTIMISM

### We're finding ways of bringing new conversations to older music.

**YOU DON'T HAVE TO TELL OLES** that choral music has the power to unite communities and change lives — an appreciation for music might as well be inscribed in Oles' DNA.

In a world that's becoming more open to the ideas and music from diverse populations, music's powerful influence is as strong as ever. Yet plenty of people are beginning to wonder where, exactly, the music typically found within the context of the traditional choral canon fits in.

For Tesfa Wondemagegnehu, visiting instructor in music and conductor of the St. Olaf Chapel Choir and Viking Chorus, the answer is right alongside some of the most current works by groundbreaking composers. Since arriving at St. Olaf in 2018, he's been pulling together musical selections that are part of the traditional canon and contrasting them with current pieces that challenge those existing norms.

Recently, for example, the Viking Chorus performed the world premiere of the conversation-starting composition *No Color*, with lyrics including:

*No color / No color can come between us  
No shade to be thrown / No turn to be taken  
to demean us / No hue of hate to be shown.*

In conjunction with the performance, the piece's nationally renowned composers, Shawn Kirchner and Stacey V. Gibbs, traveled to campus to participate in open dialogue with the Viking Chorus on how they conceptualized the composition. The composers shared with the students that while some people who hear the words "No Color" or "colorblind" find it to be a positive attribute, the opposite is also true. It was an entry point, says Wondemagegnehu, into what can often be a difficult conversation.

"This gave us an opportunity during our rehearsals to jump into dialogue and hear how each of us define the word 'colorblind.' We began to process what it means to see somebody else's race and differences while acknowledging our own," says Wondemagegnehu. "Because of these conversations and experiences, we grew as an ensemble. Singing the African American spiritual *Steal Away* — music I consider to be a major part of the choral canon — with new eyes and hearts created a such a rich experience for all of us. And to top it off, we even got to collaborate on *Steal Away* with the Twin Cities Gay Men's Chorus. So many beautiful intersections, all introduced by beginning the conversation."



ROBERT NEUBECKER/theisport

For 2020, Wondemagegnehu hopes to include an excerpt of Randall Thompson's *Testament of Freedom*, a choral piece written in 1943 using Thomas Jefferson's words. "The Thomas Jefferson we know today is a profound and problematic character," he says. "So how do we program that piece in context with broader social justice initiatives? That's where the innovation can take place."

In the end, Wondemagegnehu says, the goal is to have an ongoing conversation with older works to understand what they can continue to offer in a world that looks vastly different from the one in which they were created.

"We can have different conversations about these pieces of music now," he says. "And that's something that allows them to live even longer."



**NO MATTER HOW YOU SLICE IT**, video games are big business. In 2018 alone, global video game revenue topped \$43 billion, surpassing the total global box office for the film industry by a cool \$2 billion.

But video games are still fighting plenty of negative stereotypes: that they're misogynistic, violent, and focused on grim storylines that center on dominating, destroying, and stealing.

Associate Professor of English Rebecca Richards says there's plenty to be concerned about — but there are also remarkably encouraging changes within the larger video-game landscape. “Today we have more game developers who are creating games that are challenging that dominant narrative of what a video game is.”

Part of the reason for this shift is the non-intuitive demographics of video games: a full 48 percent of gamers are women.

While you'll find them playing all the big-budget games that are making headlines — *Call of Duty* and *Mortal Kombat*, for example — they're also very well represented in puzzle games (think *Monument Valley*) and digital collectible card games (such as *Hearthstone*).

Those eye-popping numbers are attracting a wider range of video game developers to the field itself — and giving those developers all the incentive they need to develop games that flip the dominant narrative of violent games on its head.

Take, for instance, the game *Flower*. “There are no words and no people in the game,” Richards says. “You play as the wind, going through different landscapes and picking up flower petals. As you pick up more flower petals, you regenerate the land and bring it back from decay.”

The game is meditative, beautiful, and musically gorgeous. No one dies. And no one gets hurt.

*Flower* may not (yet) be a billion-dollar behemoth, but it represents just one of the many ways that the widening video game audience and community of developers is helping make the entire industry more vibrant.

“For a long time, it was the same people making similar games over and over,” says Richards. “Now there are more of us — more people, more perspectives. People are saying, ‘I don't want to play a game where I continually die. I want to play a game where I feel peaceful, and I'm working *with* others instead of *against* others.’ More ideas are welcome, and that's something to be optimistic about.” 🌸

ERIN PETERSON is a freelance writer who runs Capstone Communications in Minneapolis. She is a regular contributor to *St. Olaf Magazine*.

REASON FOR OPTIMISM  
Video games are becoming  
more inclusive — and  
more open-hearted.



LEO ACACIA / thespot

# Making a Difference

## ST. OLAF WELCOMES THREE NEW REGENTS

The St. Olaf College Board of Regents establishes and advances the mission and strategic priorities of the college, overseeing the college's academic quality and fiscal integrity and ensuring the college's ability to accomplish its purposes both now and in the future. Sean Burress '94, Stephanie Fehr '87, and Judd Loewenstein '18 joined the college's governing board in 2019, bringing a unique range of skills and experiences that will help guide St. Olaf College in the years ahead.

By Suzy Frisch



ANNE RYAN/POLARIS

*“Our ability to work on a campus like St. Olaf and find solutions only enhances our ability to solve things in the greater world.”*

— SEAN BURRESS '94

## SEAN BURRESS '94

### Gleaning Insights Around the Globe

THE EDUCATION SEAN BURRESS RECEIVED at St. Olaf College prepared him well for a 28-year career at *Fortune 500* corporations and small businesses. But he also points to the college's other teachings as critical elements of his success: development of the whole person and being a servant leader who listens more than talks.

As a new St. Olaf Regent, Burress aims to continue fostering these characteristics among students, faculty, staff, and administrative leaders while speaking up for those who often are overlooked. “I have a passion for representing people who don't always have a voice, and I have a passion for diversity and inclusion,” he says. “I carry a high sense of responsibility that when I do have a voice, my contribution will be listening and trying to find a balance and solutions. That's something I learned to do at St. Olaf.”

These tenets propelled Burress from St. Olaf, where he majored in mathematics and minored in computer science and American racial and multicultural studies, to a career that combines all of his interests. Burress spent 23 years at General Mills, first in information technology and then in consumer insights after he earned an M.B.A. in marketing from the University of St. Thomas. Now he is senior director of global media, research, and analytics at Kimberly-Clark in Chicago.

At St. Olaf, Burress gained essential experiences inside and outside the classroom. He developed leadership skills and new perspectives from multicultural groups like Harambe and CUBE. Burress also secured an

internship in the computer room after his first year on the Hill that ultimately helped him land summer jobs at General Mills. By junior year, Burress had an offer to start his career there after graduation.

Burress spent a decade in technology at General Mills, then shifted to digital and brand work. He helped the company understand consumer behavior related to brands like Cheerios and Betty Crocker, both in the United States and globally. Attracted by a new career opportunity and family ties in his native Chicago, Burress moved to Kimberly-Clark five years ago.

When Burress joined the St. Olaf Alumni Board in 2007, he shared his expertise in consumer insights, helping conduct an alumni survey about Oles' connections to the college. The findings helped shape how St. Olaf engages with alumni. Burress hopes to apply such capabilities as a Regent too.

Burress sees great progress through the Piper Center for

Vocation and Career and the Taylor Center for Equity and Inclusion. As a member of the Board of Regents and its Advancement and College Communications Committee, Burress wants to help the campus community continue to build connections and opportunities for all, in whatever arena Oles wish to pursue.

“Our ability to work on a campus like St. Olaf and find solutions only enhances our ability to solve things in the greater world,” Burress says. “Diversity and inclusion is a start, but I think living it in practice and creating those opportunities is important. I found that St. Olaf did that for me.”



## STEPHANIE FEHR '87

### Training the Workforce of Tomorrow

THROUGHOUT HER CAREER IN HUMAN RESOURCES, Stephanie Fehr has valued the importance of building strong cultures and environments that create employee engagement. Critical elements of this work involve understanding key drivers of engagement and building talented teams comprised of diverse backgrounds and perspectives.

Fehr honed such abilities while earning an English degree at St. Olaf. Her comprehensive liberal arts education transformed her into a strong communicator, a global citizen, and a critical thinker. With this foundation, Fehr went on to earn a master's degree in human resource development from the University of St. Thomas. She has enjoyed a fruitful three-decade career at companies like Northwest Airlines, Apple, and UnitedHealthcare, helping them develop systemic talent strategies, that drive employee centered cultures.

Fehr currently serves as executive vice president and chief human capital officer for UnitedHealthcare, having returned to Minnesota

after 20 years in California. She spent the bulk of that time working for Apple, joining the company in 2000 just as it was entering the retail market. Fehr played a key role in shaping the company's talent development strategies and building the Apple retail culture, putting people at the heart of its business.

"Now we can show a correlation between employee engagement and customer engagement, but at the time it was new," Fehr says. "I was very aligned with this notion that you hire the right leaders, and they will create the right culture and environment to engage employees. I connect that back to St. Olaf and its notion of being engaged in all components of life. I often say the best company culture can engage the human spirit in life and work."

Fehr is bringing similar principles to UnitedHealthcare, where she strives to create a culture of learning for its 160,000 employees. She leads the company's holistic efforts to prepare future leaders to step up and shine as the American workforce ages.

"I love the fact that we're impacting people and their ability to do the best work of their lives. We do that by exposing them to new experiences and helping them grow through those experiences in a safe place," she says. "Our best employers will be those that help people learn by experiential learning and development."

Fehr believes St. Olaf provides students that safe place to stretch intellectually and socially. As a new Regent, she wants to help preserve the college's excellence at developing graduates — including herself — into well-rounded, happy human beings. She took on the role in gratitude for her experience and that of her son, Matthew Fehr '21. (Daughter Ashley is a sophomore at the University of San Diego, and Erika is a freshman in high school.)

Fehr serves on the board's Curriculum Committee, and she aims to use her expertise to help students develop the knowledge and skills they need to navigate regularly changing careers and lives. "So many students don't see a straight line from where they sit today to where they will go," Fehr says. "I would like to help them think about how they can build a foundation that will propel them through work and life, where they feel balance and fulfillment in both."



PHOTO COURTESY UNITEDHEALTHCARE

## JUDD LOEWENSTEIN '18

### Sharing a Fresh Perspective

ONE VISIT TO ST. OLAF COLLEGE and Judd Loewenstein was sold. Growing up in the Chicago suburbs, he hadn't heard of the college. But Loewenstein quickly discovered that it was the place for him during a hockey team recruiting trip, and that decision led to a life-changing experience.

He had planned on attending a large Division I school and playing hockey there. It seemed like the logical next step after spending two years post-high school playing junior hockey in Kenai, Alaska. But his visit to the Hill on a beautiful fall day made him realize that St. Olaf's liberal arts emphasis and community feel was the perfect fit.

"It was the best decision I could make. I learn better in smaller settings. I wanted a well-rounded education, and I knew St. Olaf offered that," says Loewenstein, who majored in economics with an emphasis in finance and a concentration in Africa and the Americas.

Today Loewenstein works as an associate of investments at Minneapolis-based Ascent Private Capital Management of U.S. Bank. He helps manage the investment portfolio of U.S. Bank's ultra high net worth clients, a position he landed after serving as a wealth management investment product intern at U.S. Bank.

Loewenstein made the most of his time at St. Olaf, including playing on and serving as captain of the hockey team, serving as co-president of the Investment Club, and working as a peer advisor and career ambassador at the Piper Center for Vocation and Career. He also belonged to the Student Athlete Advisory Board and mentored other student athletes. He continues to stay connected with St. Olaf through the close friends he made as an Ole. He plays on a men's hockey league with many of them and together they coach a bantam boys hockey team in the Minneapolis suburbs.

After an enriching undergraduate experience, Loewenstein looks forward to giving back to St. Olaf as a Regent by providing perspective about student life on campus. "I want to do my best to bring something to the table," he says. "I have several ideas, but right now I'm just listening."

Loewenstein will serve on the Community Life Committee, and one particular area where he would like to provide feedback relates to student housing. He has a unique view as a student who started college at age 20 after living independently for two years, and he believes there are opportunities for different residential options on campus.

In addition, Loewenstein would like to participate in upcoming conversations about updating St. Olaf's general education requirements. "The world is changing, and it's important that we stay up to date," he says. "The liberal arts education is a huge differentiator for St. Olaf, and it's what makes graduates well-rounded." 🍷



TOM ROSTER

SUZY FRISCH is a regular contributor to *St. Olaf Magazine*

# The St. Olaf Alumni Board welcomes seven new members, each of whom is committed to strengthening Ole connections and deepening alumni relationships with the college.

By Suzy Frisch | PHOTOS BY KEVIN HEALY

## Eldri Anderson Wittkamper '69

P'00, P'04 | Anoka, Minnesota | Retired  
Preschool Teacher



### What is your inspiration?

Serving on the Class of 1969 50th Reunion Committee provided the opportunity to renew friendships and make new connections with fellow

classmates. Our task was to work together to make the reunion a meaningful experience, and it also provided numerous chances to laugh at ourselves. It was so delightful to be with these people. After the reunion, our committee members expressed the need to continue these times for connection in the future. St. Olaf has been good to us, and we want to return it.

**What impacts do you hope to make?** We Golden Oles are “vintage” people. This stage of our lives is a time to pause and give thanks for what has been, and look to the future as a gift. My hope is that we can provide experiences for alumni to connect and enrich their lives. This can come through local chapter events, shared interest groups, lifelong learning opportunities, or travel groups. My focus will be on our largest alumni group located in the Twin Cities metro area. After seeing the Piper Center for Vocation and Career and the Taylor Center for Equity and Inclusion, and learning about their programs, I’m so impressed with what the college is doing and how it is growing. It will be good to share this with other alumni.

## Brenda McCormick '89

Edina, Minnesota | CFO and Senior Vice  
President of Finance at Children’s Minnesota

**Inspiration:** I feel like you need to support the community and get involved in things that are so important to you. St. Olaf is one of those things for me. I’ve been involved with Ole Biz, and I also helped to start the Twin Cities

Women’s Ole Network a few years ago. So when I was asked to join the Alumni Board, it felt like a good fit. I’m particularly looking forward to working with this great group of dedicated alumni and Ole parents to advance the college’s alumni engagement strategies.

**Impact:** What I really like about the board is that everybody brings a different perspective. Some members are more business driven, and some are more service focused — and everyone is at different stages in their lives. During my career, I’ve had opportunities to mentor many



new graduates as they navigate careers in business, and I hope to bring that perspective to the board. Oles stand out in business. Networking is also important in any line of

work, and I appreciate how generous Oles are in this area. One of the key strategies for the Alumni and Parent Relations Department in 2020 is around social media and creating new platforms for Oles to network outside of Facebook or LinkedIn. This is a great way to stay connected with St. Olaf and other alumni, and I’m excited to support this initiative.

## Russell Ballew '91

Sacramento, California | Certified Financial  
Planner at Wellspring International Capital

**Inspiration:** I think it’s fair to say that St. Olaf



changed my life. It’s time to give back — it’s as simple as that. I was a young African American man living in Milwaukee, living in the ghetto, and I was desperate to make

a change. Bill Green '77 [then an admissions recruiter] told me that St. Olaf was looking for young people who want to change their lives. I literally went from below zero to a clean, wonderful campus where people were loving and kind. It allowed me to find my legs and thrive.

**Impact:** I will serve in whatever areas they want me to serve. There are times when you enter a situation with a clear idea of what you want to do, and there are other times when you are open. You often get the chance to do the most good because you are receptive. Mother Teresa used to say, “I go according to the need.” I love that, and this is one of the things that I think St. Olaf represents. It’s a great place, and it tends to attract people who do good in the world. I’ll come to meetings and listen and learn where I can be of service, and that’s where I will go.

## Nina Palit '93

Palatine, Illinois | IT Manager in Human  
Resources Services at Alight Solutions, Chicago



### Inspiration:

I went for my 20th reunion at St. Olaf and I was mostly looking forward to a weekend with my friends. But I was really floored and just thought, “This place is fantas-

tic.” When my 25th came around, I said I would love to help. Now I see why I went there. I was struck by how much I had in common with my classmates. It’s shared values and what I learned at St. Olaf; it doesn’t have to do with race or religion or anything else. St. Olaf really aligns with who I am as a person — who I was then and who I am now. I am so impressed with the Taylor Center for Equity and Inclusion, and it is such a welcoming and thriving environment. It’s so diverse at St. Olaf now!

**Impact:** I would really love to increase access for the whole spectrum of multicultural students, whether it’s access to St. Olaf, or access to activities, or retention, or access to jobs after St. Olaf. I have good connections to jobs in Chicago, and I would love to connect people here. I took a nontraditional route to technology, and I want to show students that you don’t have to be good at technology to be in technology. There are skills students gain at St. Olaf that translate to work skills, such as critical thinking, writing, speaking. St. Olaf didn’t help me get my first job, but it helped me be successful in my field.



## Bilal Alkatout '07

Minneapolis | Senior Program Officer, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota Foundation



**Inspiration:** I have had exposure to nonprofits and different organizational models and approaches, but I realized that I didn't have hands-on experience in governing

organizations. So I've been on the board of the Coalition of Asian American Leaders and on the finance committee for the Headwaters Foundation for Justice. My philosophy is that a lot of the barriers and disruption to equity really lies in the inequity of power and wealth in this country. I'm interested in engaging St. Olaf students in the social impact network and some of the nonprofits I work with.

**Impact:** I would like to be involved in the alumni awards, chapter engagement, and multicultural engagement. To be honest, I didn't get the opportunity to do the self-identity work at St. Olaf that could have been really valuable. I didn't get a chance to connect with people in an important way about my homosexuality, about my Palestinian identity — what those identities mean — and engage with other people who want to engage with their culture and identity. I think the board offers really good grounds for having conversations and figuring out how to do that more broadly.

## Mitchell Rennie '14

Fort Collins, Colorado | National Sales Representative, Darwill, Inc.

**Inspiration:** St. Olaf was a unique, incredible experience, and there's something to be said about the community that's fostered at St. Olaf. It's an awesome opportunity if I can help promote that community and offer opportunities to recent graduates who are looking to reconnect, or help reconnect folks who have been away for 30 or 40 years. I sang in the St. Olaf Choir, and Dr. Armstrong always said, "Go forth and do



good works of service." That resonated with me. St. Olaf develops individuals into hardworking, dedicated, forward-thinking people who are willing to volunteer their time

and make the world a better place. I think Oles deserve to have a little of that turned back on them. We're here to serve you too. That's what drives me.

**Impact:** I'm serving on the Events Committee, and we're trying to establish great opportunities for Oles to reconnect with other Oles. If you just graduated and are looking to reconnect with a community that's similar or you've been away for 25 years, we're going to create the space to reconnect and allow you to have meaningful experiences with other folks from

St. Olaf. Whether it's through volunteering during an Ole Day of Service or just getting together at a happy hour and having fun, or helping plan your 25th reunion, maybe it will encourage people to give back to the school and the greater alumni community.

## Will Lutterman '15

Evanston, Illinois | Graduate Student in Higher Education Administration and Policy, Northwestern University

**Inspiration:** When I was asked to be on the Alumni Board, the first thing that came to mind was to pay it forward. I had so many alumni and faculty in my life who took the extra step to help me with what I wanted to do. The call to service is a Lutheran tradition, and it's something I enjoy doing. I enjoy giving back to the community. I want to give an extra lift to others.



**Impact:** Being a graduate student in higher education, I'm really interested in concepts and ideas about equity and access. These are big issues in higher education. I also want

to engage all different segments of our alumni and really help bring people together who have traditionally not been engaged by the St. Olaf alumni community. I want to work with other members of the board to think strategically about how we can bring value to all kinds of different alumni. It's about thinking outside the box about how to engage folks. It can be in-person events or virtual events — there are so many different avenues. We should think about new and novel ways to elicit feedback from different members of the alumni community about how we can create and foster the alumni community we want. 🍂

## ST. OLAF ALUMNI BOARD

Front row, L-R: Eldri Wittkamper '69, Mitchell Rennie '14, Nina Palit '93, Will Lutterman '15, Brenda McCormick '89, Aldra Allison '77. Second row: Mariah DuBose '16, Bill Lindberg '70, Eric Johnson '78, Sonja Clark '03. Back row: Lee Sather '66, Janine Braman P'17, '20, Director of Alumni and Parent Relations Brad Hoff '89. (Not pictured: Russell Ballew '91, Bilal Alkatout '07.)





# Alumni Achievement Awards

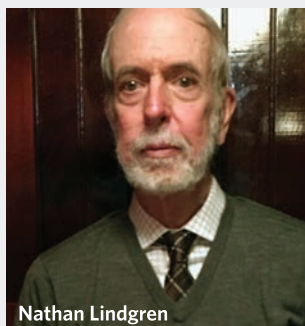
Each year, St. Olaf College recognizes alumni whose service and leadership exemplify the ideals and mission of the college. In honoring these graduates for their exceptional achievements and professional contributions, they become an integral part of the college's history and a testament to its tradition of excellence. The college was pleased to recognize the 2019 recipients — Nathan Lindgren '63, Karine Swensen Moe '85, P'19, and as a group, Jerry Appeldoorn '67, Douglas Tate '70, P'06, Robert Gehringer '71, and John Mittelsteadt '81, P'10, '12, '15 — during Homecoming Weekend.

By Marla Hill Holt '88 | PHOTOS BY KEVIN HEALY

## Nathan Lindgren '63

### DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARD RECIPIENT

Physicist Nathan Lindgren earned a B.A. in physics and religion, Phi Beta Kappa, at St. Olaf. He also holds a Ph.D. in electrical engineering from the University of California—Berkeley. His distinguished career reflects a deeply grounded commitment to serving the world beyond his Upper Midwestern roots, and his professional achievements include 40 years as an expert researcher in national defense technologies.



Nathan Lindgren

Lindgren was among the first contingents of U.S. Peace Corps volunteers, serving in Sierra Leone shortly after graduating from St. Olaf. In that capacity, he taught high school math and science courses and drew on his experience as an Eagle Scout to lead young men in a Boy Scout troop. He later taught physics at the University of Malawi, and both experiences fostered Lindgren's deep love of African peoples and cultures.

The majority of Lindgren's career was spent as a researcher in radar studies at Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Lincoln Laboratory, a federally funded center that researches and develops advanced technologies to meet critical national security needs. He was known for his expert physical intuition, as well as his mentorship of younger colleagues and staff.

Lindgren is proud of his Norwegian heritage and, together with his wife, Denise Picard Lindgren, is a member of St. Olaf's Norwegian-American Historical Association. They also contribute to the college's Lindgren-Lohre Scholarship Fund.

## Karine Swensen Moe '85

### ALUMNI ACHIEVEMENT AWARD RECIPIENT

Karine Swensen Moe is provost and dean of the faculty at Macalester College. Her bachelor's degree in economics from St. Olaf was the foundation for further education, including a master's degree in public policy from Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government and a Ph.D. in economics from the University of Minnesota.

Moe's teaching interests have focused on labor economics, gender, and poverty, and her research is centered on issues related to how women's use of time affects labor market outcomes. She has co-authored one book, edited another, and written many articles and book chapters. She speaks regularly on topics at the intersection of gender and economics, as well as on issues affecting higher education.

Moe has spent her entire career at Macalester, beginning in 1995, when she was hired as an assistant professor in the Department of Economics. She was named the F.R. Bigelow Professor of Economics in

2010 and promoted to provost in 2015. Her leadership contributions at Macalester include restructuring its Institute for Global Citizenship to better integrate multiculturalism and inclusion into the institute's programs. She has also led efforts to improve Macalester's hiring of faculty of color, develop an entrepreneurship program, and build a new \$32 million theater, dance, and classroom building.



Karine and Paul Moe

Moe currently serves on the executive committee of the Advisory Board of Deans for the Associated Colleges of the Midwest. She also is a board member of the Minnesota Institute for Talented Youth. Her family includes her husband, Paul Moe '83, and her children, Avery Moe and Halsey Moe '19.

## Jerry Appeldoorn '67, Douglas Tate '70, Robert Gehringer '71, John Mittelsteadt '81

### OUTSTANDING SERVICE AWARD RECIPIENTS

Doctors Jerry Appeldoorn, Douglas Tate, Robert Gehringer, and John Mittelsteadt have made significant contributions to St. Olaf's Peruvian Medical Experience (PME), developing and sustaining this life-changing experiential learning program for students who are planning careers in health care.

These four service-minded medical professionals have shared their expertise in the health sciences and mentored scores of St. Olaf students. Through their involvement with PME, they have assisted students in vocational discernment while guiding them in providing basic medical and dental care to impoverished Peruvian communities. They've engaged students in service learning to understand how poverty and culture interact with medical access and care, and they continue to support students in their career development.

The careers of Appeldoorn, Tate, Gehringer, and Mittelsteadt reflect a compassion and commitment to serving others, from participation in international medical service work to the founding of nonprofit organizations focused on health care for underserved populations.



Jerry Appeldoorn, John Mittelsteadt, Douglas Tate, and Robert Gehringer



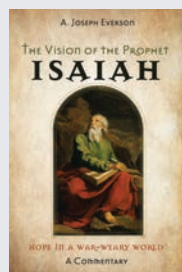
Oles, submit your class news online! [stolaf.edu/alumni/share-your-news](http://stolaf.edu/alumni/share-your-news)  
It's easier than ever to share your latest news, photos, and updated contact information! Questions? Email [alum-office@stolaf.edu](mailto:alum-office@stolaf.edu) or call 507-786-3028 or 888-865-6537.

## 1950s

### BOOKS BY 1950s OLE AUTHORS

*The History of Rheumatology at Mayo Clinic* (Mayo Clinic, 2018), by Gene Hunder '54

*With Bible in One Hand and Newspaper in the*



*Other: The Bible in the Public Square* (Resource Publications, 2018), by Charles Peterson '56

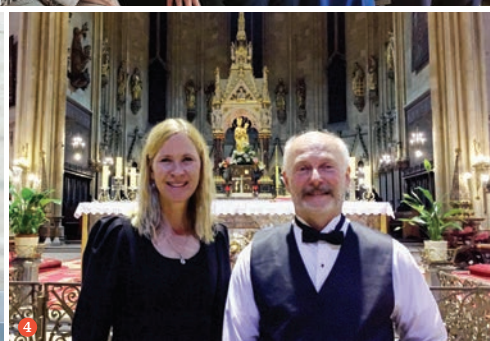
*The Vision of the Prophet Isaiah: Hope in a War-Wearied World — A Commentary* (Wipf & Stock, 2019), by A. Joseph Everson '59



## 1960s

Jane Owens Fewer '60 writes, "This fall, nine graduates of the 1960 St. Olaf nursing class visited the new home of the St. Olaf Department of Nursing, located in Regents Hall of Natural Sciences. Susan Huehn, chair of the nursing program, and Emily Carroll, simulation coordinator, gave an exciting and informative tour of the new facilities." 1

Pictured, L-R: Jan Smidt Olson, Sonya Hansen Dyste, Jane Fewer, Mary Buntrock Johnson, Dorcas Egge O'Connor, Jan Weberg Swedberg, Jeanette Needle Rondstvedt, Sonja Wold Salvesson, and Lois Thompson Wambheim. 2 Susan Corey Everson '61 writes, "In August, 32 women from the Class of 1961 gathered for lunch at the Ole Store in Northfield." 2 It was a great chance to renew old acquaintances." 3 Roger Aus '62 writes, "In August of 2019, I gave a paper at the annual meeting of the Society of New Testament Studies in Marburg, Germany, on Luke 1:78-79, part of Zechariah's 'Benedictus.' I am retired!"

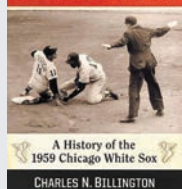


## 1970s

Eric Nye '74, a University of Wyoming retired English professor, was elected a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries in London during its summer ballot. Eric joins about 3,000 other Fellows of the oldest society with a Royal Charter to further the

### BOOKS BY 1970s OLE AUTHORS

#### Comiskey Park's Last World Series



*Comiskey Park's Last World Series: The History of the 1959 Chicago White Sox* (McFarland Books, 2019), by Charles N. Billington '70

*Eagle and Turtle* (Blurb Self-Publishing Platform, 2018), by Marie Grender Clark '70

*The Devouring Land* (Main Street Rag Publishing Co., 2019), by Patrick Cabello Hansel '75

study of history and antiquities. 4 Jeffrey Cook '76 writes that he has been re-elected as a senior member at Hughes Hall, Cambridge University, England, in the area of law, where he also serves as director and senior treasurer of rowing for the college. 5 Jeff also was elected an honorary member of the Trinity Hall (Cambridge) Boat Club. A supporter of St. Olaf rowing, this past summer he donated two rowing shells to the St. Olaf Boat Club. He adds, "I am retired!" 6 Donald Tarnasky '76 and Kristina Forslund Kahl '87, who both belong to the Sacramento [Calif.] Choral Society, participated in the choir's European tour to Austria, Slovenia, and Croatia last summer. He adds, "Kristina, Barbara Wammer '67, and I were members of the St. Olaf Chapel Choir. Barbara and I sang in the Sacramento State University Choir for more than 20 years. We continue to be active ambassadors in Sacramento, and are involved in local and international choir programs and concerts." 7 Dave and Kristina are pictured in the Cathedral of the Assumption in Zagreb, Croatia. 8 Richard Sethre '77 presented on climate change and psychology at the Interamerican Society of Psychology conference in Havana, Cuba, in July 2019. 9 Debra Freigang Garvey '79 spent a week last summer as an instructor at an English language camp in the town of Trhové Sviny in the Czech Republic. 10 The camp helps people in the surrounding area improve their English language skills with the use of games, crafts, and Bible stories. Deb also was able to take a side tour to Prague,

her first visit since 1975, when she was an exchange student. While it was a busy week, "there is always time for ice cream and chocolate."

## 1980s

Kristine Knickrehm Oleson '80 participated in the Hennepin Hundred Ultra Marathon in October and earned a finisher's buckle. 11 David Dahlin '81, who spent nearly 20 years growing Compassion International, an international development organization that helps children living in extreme poverty, has been named the new executive director of Charter for Compassion. Formed in 2009, this

### BOOKS BY 1980s OLE AUTHORS

*"Doh wil ich awer!" The Radio Adventures of Asseba and Sabina* (Pennsylvania German Cultural Heritage Center, Masthof Press, 2019), translated by Gregory J. Hanson '81

*Railway Jack: The True Story of an Amazing Baboon* (Capstone Editions, 2020), by KT Johnston (Kathie Johnston Soland '83)



*Fine, Thanks: Stories from the Cancerland Jungle* (Black Rose Writing Independent Publishers, 2019), by Mary Dunnewold '84

*Junker Dreams* (Hopewell Publications, 2019), by Paul D. Dickinson '88





# ALUMNI & FAMILY TRAVEL

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, & broaden our perspectives together. Registration is now open for the travel programs below and more!

**Windmills, Tulips, & Belgian Delights**  
April 14-22, 2020 | A river cruise aboard the Scenic Opal, led by St. Olaf President David R. Anderson '74 and author Priscilla Paton

**Wilderness Adventure in the Boundary Waters** | June 7-13, 2020 | Led by Judy Tegtmeier, Director of Recreation

**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

**Theater in London** | Sept. 11-20, 2020  
Led by Diana Postlethwaite, Professor Emerita of English, and Paul Thiboutot, Vice President and Dean of Admissions, Carleton College

**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** | Dec. 6-14, 2020  
A river cruise with the American Queen Steamboat Company

**The Heights of the Grand Tour: The Great Conversation in Italy** | Jan. 19-31, 2021  
Led by Karen Cherewatuk, Professor of English, and Bob Thacker

**America's Struggle for Civil Rights: Religion, Race, and the Work of Justice**  
April 21-30, 2021 | Led by David Booth, Associate Professor of Religion, and Ann Tobin, Retired Attorney

Many more programs are in the works. Check [stolaf.edu/travel](http://stolaf.edu/travel) for the latest information.

\*\*\* SAVE THE DATE! \*\*\*  
**Reunion Weekend 2020**  
**May 29, 30 & 31**  
Registration opens mid-March;  
pre-registration closes early May.  
\*\*\* [wp.stolaf.edu/alumni](http://wp.stolaf.edu/alumni) \*\*\*

organization grew out of a wish that TED granted to British scholar Karen Armstrong as part of a TED prize she received. ■ **Daniel King '83** completed his 10th marathon in Oslo, Norway, during a trip with daughter, Doria, and son, Ethan. ■ **Le Ann Finger '85**, PGA/LPGA, senior director of tournaments and championships for the Arizona Golf Association, has become the 10th woman to earn PGA Master Professional status. She is just the second woman to earn the distinction in the area of Player Development, and is now one of only 375 PGA Master Professionals among the association's 29,000 PGA members. ■ **Paul Dickinson '88** ① was interviewed for Minnesota Public Radio by Youa Vang, who wrote: "Paul Dickinson is Minnesota's premier punk poet ... [and] he certainly puts the 'auto' into his new autobiography, *Junker Dreams*. The memoir brings us along for the ride as Dickinson details vignettes of past lives, past loves, and the 20+ cars he owned and operated from the late '80s to the early 2000s." Read the full interview at [blog.thecurrent.org/2019/05/](http://blog.thecurrent.org/2019/05/). ■ **Arne Flaten '89** is head of the Patti & Rusty Rueff School of Design, Art, and Performance and professor of art history at Purdue University in West Lafayette, Indiana. ② Previously he served as director of the School of Art at Ball State University, and successively as chair of visual arts and associate dean of fine arts at Coastal Carolina University.

## 1990s

**Timothy Cofer '90** has been named CEO of Central Garden & Pet Company, a leading innovator, marketer, and producer of quality branded products for the lawn and garden and pet supplies markets. He also joined the company's board of directors. ■



**Wendy Helgemo '91** and **Tal Anderson '91** ③ attended the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) annual national dinner in late September, "celebrating love and fighting for equality and justice." HRC President Alphonso David, the first person of color to lead HRC, announced new initiatives for LGBTQ people facing challenging times, including a new transgender justice initiative, a new partnership with the "Fair Fight" voter initiative, and a focus on expanding the footprint of the Human Rights Campaign, the world's largest LGBTQ organization. Tal is on the HRC Board of Governors. Wendy, who received the St. Olaf Distinguished Alumni Award in 2019, is of counsel at Big Fire Law and Policy Group. ■ **Heather Otis Rau '96**, lead interior designer for John McClain Design in Orlando, recently won the People's Pick award for the Color + Pattern category of the HGTV Designer of the Year contest. ■ **April Snow Schwickert '98** recently bumped into **David Bode '99** while at Stephen Ministry Leadership Training in Orlando. ④ David works as a program director for Stephen Ministry in St. Louis. April, who is the office manager and community care coordinator for Emmaus Baptist Church in Northfield, is now part of the Stephen Ministry team at Emmaus, which also includes Oles **Mark Quinnell '80** and **Susan Stiemke Quinnell '80**. ■ **Kathryn Lohre '99** was one of four faith leaders recognized by the National Council of Churches for their outstanding service and leadership in ecumenical and interreligious movements. Kathryn, the 2019 recipient of the J. Irwin Miller Award for Excellence in Ecumenical Leadership, serves as assistant to the presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and Executive for Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations & Theological Discernment. ⑤





## 2000S

**Katherine Larson '00** was promoted to professor of English at the University of Toronto and is also serving as chair of the Department of English at the University of Toronto Scarborough. ■ **Jeffrey Gosse '01** received the 2019 Golden Apple Award, given to the top teachers in Northeast Wisconsin. ■ **Lee Henderson '01** joined U.S. Bank as vice president of issues management and reputation communications. ■ **Sarah Schuurman '02** writes, “**Autumn Schreiber Hubbell '02** and her son Wilder, **Amanda Jacobson '02** and her daughter Vivian, **Leslie Nechville Schmitt '02** and her son William traveled to Egypt this past spring to visit me and my son Noah, when I was working [from 2016 until this summer] at the U.S. Embassy in Cairo. ❶ We journeyed to Luxor and visited King Tut’s tomb in the Valley of the Kings.” ■ **Charlotte Engel D’Evelyn '03** is now an assistant professor in ethnomusicology in the Skidmore College Music Department. Charlotte and her husband, Sean D’Evelyn '03, relocated with their two young sons from L.A. to Saratoga Springs, New York, with Sean securing a visiting assistant professor position in Skidmore’s Economics Department. “We are enjoying the liberal arts environment and small college town life again for the first time in many years!” ■ **Kate Terebova Placzek '03** received an NIH grant to study ADHD. ■ **Lauren Cassat Evans '07**, **Charity Hall Coulter '07**, **Laurie Bardenwerper Lucking '07**, and **Erin Manlove Henry '07** have been friends since they met in Ellingson Hall. Within the past year, they all welcomed baby girls into their families. ❷ “We hope Eleanor, Marian, Lydia, and Esther (Class of 2041) will be as close as their moms!” ■ **Kristen Mueller '05** is a board certified physician practicing emergency medicine at Washington University in St. Louis and a clinician researcher in firearm violence and injury prevention. An active member of the Washington University Gun Violence Initiative, Kristen serves as the physician liaison to the newly launched St. Louis Area Hospital-Based Violence Intervention Program, also

known as Life Outside Violence. In recognition of this work, the National Network of Hospital-Based Violence Intervention Programs awarded Kristen the Marla Becker Scholarship. ■ **David Greder '06** has joined the faculty of Waldorf University as an assistant professor of religion and philosophy. ■ **Christian Huebner '06** was ordained a Catholic priest for the Archdiocese of Washington, D.C., this past summer. Among the many Oles present were his parents, **Paul Huebner '82** and **Rebecca Hillestad Huebner '81**, his sister **Kate Huebner '09**, his grandmother **Sonja Hegge Hillestad '58**, and his aunt **Pamela Robinson Hillestad '84**. ❸ He now serves as parochial vicar at St. Mary of the Mills Parish in Laurel, Maryland. ■ **Karri Whipple '06** graduated with a Ph.D. in religious studies from Drew University and began a position as faculty fellow in liberal studies at New York University.



“The connections I make with the students as a counselor is what makes Music Camp so special for me. I am able not only to share the love of music with these students, but I am able to see how much they learn and grow as musicians in just one short week.”

— Martha Barth '19

## ST. OLAF CAMPS

THE HILL THAT TRANSFORMS YOUR SUMMER

SWIM CAMPS | June 7–11 · June 14–18 · June 21–25

VOLLEYBALL CAMPS | June 15–17 · July 27–29 · July 31–August 2

DANCE WORKSHOP | June 21–25

MUSIC ACADEMY | June 21–27

THEATER CAMP | June 21–27

DIVING CAMPS | July 19–23 · July 26–30

OLECHESS CAMP | July 19–24

Learn more about Summer Youth Programs: [stolaf.edu/camps](http://stolaf.edu/camps)

For registration information:  
email [summer@stolaf.edu](mailto:summer@stolaf.edu) or call 507-786-3031

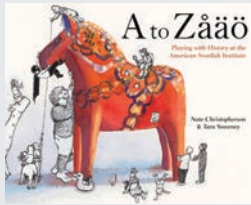


BOOKS BY 2000s OLE AUTHORS

*The Matter of Song in Early Modern England: Texts in and of the Air* (Oxford University Press, 2019), by **Katherine Larson '00**

*Adorned* (Immaginare Press, 2019), by **Jen Bouchard '01**

*A to Zääö: Playing with History at the American Swedish Institute* (University of Minnesota Press, 2019), by **Nate Christopherson '03** and Tara Sweeney



*Engaging the Age of Jane Austen: Public Humanities in Practice* (University of Iowa Press, 2019), by **Bridget Draxler '05**

*Milly and the Tale from Across the Street* (Odin's Opus Publishing, 2019), by **Martha Klopp Langager '06**

BOOKS BY 2010s OLE AUTHORS



*Rebound, Restart, Renew, Rebuild, Rejoice* (Lithic Press, 2019), poetry by **Timothy Otte '10**

*Another Fortune* (Buckman Publishing, 2019), a poetry collection by **Liz Lampman '11**

2010S

**Mattia Maurée '07** received an unrestricted grant as a finalist in composition for the Artist Fellowship Program of the Mass Cultural Council, which works to elevate a rich cultural life in Massachusetts. Also, as part of the Mayor's Poetry Program, Mattia

has a poem up in Boston City Hall until June 2020. ■

**Kayla Hoel '10**, an immigration attorney, has joined the law firm of Fredrikson & Byron in the Immigration Group. ① Kayla advises clients navigating the complexities of immigration law. ■ **Katherine Horvat Teiken '10** was recognized



as a leader in the clean energy sector by *Midwest Energy News* at its 2019 40 Under 40 Awards. ② Katherine works to advance affordable housing programs and policies that strive to mitigate the climate crisis as well as prepare affordable housing for the effects of climate change. ■ **Eric Choate '12** ③ has been named the 10th artistic director of the Grammy Award-winning San Francisco Boys

Chorus. ■ **Benjamin Mayo '12** is a doctor of orthopedic surgery at the University of Illinois at Chicago. ■ **Kaia Preus '13**, who teaches creative writing in Minneapolis, won the 2018 Essay Press/University of Washington at Bothell Book Prize with her first book, *The War Requiem*, which will be published in 2020. ④ She is currently working on both a novel and a collection of essays. 📖



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Celebrate  
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SATURDAY, MARCH 14, 2020  
6 P.M. TO MIDNIGHT

Twins Target Field  
Carew Atrium

Enjoy cocktails, dinner, a fund-a-need auction, live music, dancing, and lots of Ole Pridel!

Your generous gifts made during the event will be directed to financial aid and scholarship support for students currently living and learning on the Hill.

[stolaf.edu/celebrate](http://stolaf.edu/celebrate)



## Remembering Jim Dimick

James "Jim" Dimick, longtime head baseball coach at St. Olaf and professor emeritus of physical education, passed away on December 2, 2019, at the age of 91.

Born in 1928 on his family's farm in Almena, Wisconsin, he graduated from Barron High School in 1946 and joined the U.S. Marine Corps, where he served with the 2nd Amphibious Battalion out of Camp LeJeune. After being honorably discharged in 1948 and marrying his high school sweetheart, Nancy Hopkins, in 1950, Jim attended St. Cloud State University, graduating in 1952 with a B.S. in physical education and biology. He later earned his M.A. from the University of Minnesota. Before joining the St. Olaf physical education faculty in 1967, he spent 15 years teaching and coaching at high schools in Wisconsin and Minnesota, developing 10 championship teams.



Dimick coached the St. Olaf baseball team to 14 conference championships and a record of 587-320-15. The team was selected to the NCAA Division III Regional Tournament 14 times. Dimick coached the College All-Star Baseball Team that toured Alaska and Korea in 1979. He served on the U.S. National Baseball Team staff in 1989 on a tour of the U.S., Cuba, and Puerto Rico. He conducted baseball clinics all over the country and the world. Jim was a past president of the American Baseball Coaches Association and served on its board of directors for many years. He was awarded the Minnesota Baseball Outstanding Achievement Award. Both the MIAC Coach of the Year and the Minnesota Retired Coach Award are named in his honor. St. Olaf retired Dimick's number (32) when he retired from the college in 1997.

His family shares, "He was called to be a coach. He knew how to lead the players he coached to be honorable, hard-working young men. He was even more gifted as a husband, dad, and grandfather, loving his family with faithfulness, gentleness, and devotion. He was a good friend, a delightful storyteller, and a servant of God. He will be missed by so many whose lives were immeasurably gifted by his presence."

Survivors include his children, Mary (René) Clausen '73, Jim Jr. '75 (Martha Holton), Elizabeth (Mark) Hofeldt '78, Dan '81 (Cahrene Thorsen '81), Jill (Ralph Pribble) Oliveri '84, and John '86 (Meghan Houghton '92), as well as 13 grandchildren, four great-grandchildren (including Andrew Dimick '08), other relatives, and many friends. His wife, Nan, preceded him in death in 2010.

## Remembering Robert "BJ" Johnson

Robert Clifford "BJ" Johnson, who managed St. Olaf music organizations for nearly 40 years before retiring in 2015, passed away on October 16, 2019, with his family at his side after living with ALS, also known as Lou Gehrig's disease.

Graduating from Concordia College in Moorhead in 1971, Johnson married Sigrid "Sig" Nelson in Bismarck, North Dakota, and moved to Monticello, Minnesota, where he taught public school music while Sig pursued a bachelor of music degree at St. Cloud State University. The couple then moved to Ann Arbor, Michigan, where Sig completed her graduate studies at the University of Michigan, while Johnson worked for the University Musical Society, the largest university concert series at the time.

Johnson was hired by St. Olaf in 1978 to manage the college's music organizations. His office was responsible for arranging domestic and international concert tours, facilitating the technical production of the renowned St. Olaf Christmas Festival, and overseeing the commercial recording business (St. Olaf Records).

Under Johnson's leadership, the St. Olaf Choir, St. Olaf Band, and St. Olaf Orchestra went on a combined total of 30 international concert tours, in addition to their annual domestic concert tours. The St. Olaf Christmas Festival has been a featured highlight of the holiday season on PBS since 1983 because of Johnson's collaborative efforts with Twin Cities Public Television. He also was the catalyst for creating the two PBS television Christmas specials in 2005 and 2013, which the St. Olaf Choir filmed at the Nidaros Cathedral in Trondheim, Norway. In addition, because of his entrepreneurial vision, the 2007 and 2011 St. Olaf Christmas Festivals were streamed live in theaters throughout the United States.

Beyond his work at St. Olaf, Johnson was a leader in forging alliances with music colleagues and supporters of choral music. He served on the steering committee that brought the 2002 World Symposium on Choral Music to Minneapolis and was instrumental in founding the College Music Tour Managers Association. He also received several awards, including an Emmy Award by the Upper Midwest Emmy Awards for his role in the 2013 PBS production of *Christmas in Norway with the St. Olaf Choir* and the ACE award for lifetime achievement by the American Choral Directors Association of Minnesota in 2015. In 2018, Johnson was inducted into the Hall of Fame by the Alexandria School District in recognition and honor of his significant achievement and distinction in arts administration at St. Olaf College.

In addition to his wife, Sigrid, Johnson is survived by their sons, Peter Johnson and Andy Johnson '04 (Sarah), and grandsons, Soren Meilan and Halvor Clifford, all of whom reside in the Twin Cities. He is also survived by a sister, Karen Elizabeth Johnson.

Friends can see Johnson's October 27, 2019, memorial service at [st.olaf.edu/multimedia/play/bjmemorial](http://st.olaf.edu/multimedia/play/bjmemorial).





Future Ole **Arlo Anway**



Future Ole **Solveig Hanson**



Future Oles **Soren, Anika, and Gretchen Sesvold**

## Future Oles

Laurie Van Alstyne '00 and Lori Holmes, a daughter, Kalei  
Katie Balfanz Anway '07 and Russell Anway '07, a son, Arlo  
Whitney Klefsaas Byers '08 and Thomas Byers, a son, Oliver  
Rachel Dougherty Witte '08 and Mikael Witte '08, a daughter, Rose  
Laura Hanson '09 and Tyler Moe-Slepica, a daughter, Solveig  
Luci Iverson Sesvold '09 and Chris Sesvold, twins Gretchen and Soren  
Sarah Chao '12 and Matt Menzenski, a son, Leo Thomas

## Weddings

Troy Nelson '85 and Monica Lindstrom Nelson '85, Aug. 15, 2019  
Katy Carthey Zobel '85 and Mike Zobel '86, Aug. 3, 2019  
Sarah Jerstad Clapham '95 and Chris Clapham, Oct. 13, 2018  
Emily Ederer Russell '08 and Eric Russell, July 14, 2018  
Ben Mayo '12 and Caroline Mayo, June 1, 2018  
Kari Nelson Kohrs '13 and Aaron Kohrs '16, July 20, 2019  
Rebecca Barry '14 and Carson Koepke '14, July 27, 2019  
Lark Meiners Reasoner '15 and John Reasoner '15, June 8, 2019

## Deaths

Evelyn Thompson Esler '40, Eagle Grove, Iowa, Aug. 3, 2019  
Marian Ogard Severson '40, Roselle, Ill., Dec. 23, 2018  
Harriet "Ronnie" Ronken Lynton '41, Pittsboro, N.C., March 18, 2018  
Lorraine Nesvig Ranney '41, Madison, Wis., Sept. 17, 2019  
Ruth Herman Falk '42, Winter Park, Fla., June 24, 2019  
Jeanette "Jan" Higgins Dahl '43, Cave Creek, Ariz., Aug. 2, 2019  
Geraldine "Jerry" Smith Pearson '45, Minneapolis, Oct. 25, 2019  
Margaret Mohn Spear '45, Northfield, Minn., July 23, 2019  
\*John Thorsness '45, Spooner, Wis., July 19, 2019  
Lucile Rasmussen Finn '46, Ithaca, N.Y., Sept. 5, 2019  
Margaret Stubstad Hinz '46, Zumbrota, Minn., July 18, 2019  
Wallace Berg '47, Edina, Minn., July 7, 2019  
Geneva Stegner Eschweiler '48, Minneapolis, Feb. 6, 2019  
\*William Lundquist '48, Spokane, Wash., Sept. 3, 2019  
Lucille Haals Paulsen '48, Waterloo, Iowa, June 25, 2019  
Betty Peterson Merrell '49, Wheat Ridge, Colo., July 13, 2019  
Alene Halvorson Moris '49, Seattle, Aug. 31, 2019  
Mae Jorgenson Nielsen '49, Prior Lake, Minn., April 9, 2019  
Dagny Austin Vanvig '49, Bemidji, Minn., Sept. 3, 2019  
Donna Leland Crotty '50, Kalispell, Mont., April 13, 2018

\*Roger Erickson '50, Wray, Colo., Aug. 17, 2019  
Elizabeth Reinertson Williams '50, Rochester, Minn., June 24, 2019  
Leonard Nysted '51, Eagle River, Wis., Aug. 30, 2019  
Gloria Thompson Scott '51, Fairmont, Minn., Oct. 15, 2019  
Ruth Johnson Dachhoff '52, Grand Rapids, Mich., Oct. 18, 2019  
Marie Hovind Grout '52, Foothill Ranch, Calif., July 26, 2018  
Sonya Pedersen Margerum '52, West Lafayette, Ind., Nov. 3, 2019  
\*Russell "Buster" Mauer '52, Grayslake, Ill., July 13, 2019  
Eugene "Gene" Skibbe '52, Edina, Minn., Sept. 12, 2019  
Thomas Bergfald '53, Portland, Ore., May 17, 2019  
\*Wayne Hansen '53, Hudson, Wis., June 26, 2019  
\*Harvey Hummel '53, Minneapolis, Sept. 6, 2019  
\*Russell Kroncke '53, Deerfield, Ill., Sept. 10, 2019  
\*Norman Larson '53, Barron, Wis., July 8, 2019  
Selma Richardson '53, Champaign, Ill., July 10, 2019  
H. "Keith" Tellekson '53, Prior Lake, Minn., Aug. 19, 2019  
\*Jon Tollefson '53, Mantorville, Minn., Sept. 26, 2019  
Gloria Mortensen Knutson '54, Plymouth, Minn., Oct. 27, 2019  
Marilyn Hanson Feser '55, Sarasota, Fla., June 14, 2019  
Shirley Thompson Vaux '55, Edina, Minn., Dec. 31, 2017  
Shirley Hansen Vegdahl '55, Camas, Wash., Sept. 14, 2019  
Marlys Brings Girard '56, Appleton, Wis., Oct. 22, 2019  
Quintin Johnson '57, Livermore, Calif., June 16, 2019  
Janet "Kay" De Broux Gertz '59, Laguna Hills, Calif., July 21, 2019  
Paul Mikkelsen '59, Maple Plain, Minn., Aug. 13, 2019  
Jean Heyerholm Undem '59, Springdale, Ark., July 20, 2019  
Jay Johnson '60, Bemidji, Minn., Aug. 29, 2019  
Peter Namtvedt '60, Seattle, Sept. 10, 2019  
Marguerite Bruder Overlund '60, Shakopee, Minn., July 4, 2019  
Carter Pederson '60, Chesterfield, Mo., May 18, 2019  
Florabelle "Joy" Tjaden Boyken '62, Titonka, Iowa, Sept. 6, 2019  
Robert Duea '62, Surprise, Ariz., June 17, 2019  
Kermit Uggen '62, St. Paul, Minn., April 26, 2019  
Anton "Bud" Weber '62, Lake Barrington, Ill., July 25, 2019  
Herbert Hetrick '63, Ventnor City, N.J., July 27, 2019  
Weston "Wes" Mack '63, Viroqua, Wis., Aug. 13, 2019  
Robert Schilling '63, Mesa, Ariz., July 5, 2019  
John Thorson '63, Sparta, Mich., Sept. 21, 2019  
Dianne Bartel Gilbody '64, Naples, Fla., June 28, 2018  
Michael "Mike" Helmen '64, Balsam Lake, Wis., Aug. 26, 2019



Future Ole **Leo Menzenski**

## Remembering Gene Skibbe '52

Eugene "Gene" Skibbe, pastor, author, and 2003 St. Olaf College Distinguished Alumni Award recipient passed away on September 12, 2019, at age 89.

In 2012, Skibbe and his wife, Margaret Froiland Skibbe '53, gifted St. Olaf and the Flaten Art Museum with their collection of 180 prints by contemporary Japanese artist Yoshida Hodaka (1926-95), making St. Olaf the world's premier holder of Hodaka's work. Margaret and



Skibbe, a professor emeritus of religion at Augsburg College, had collected modern Japanese art for 25 years before they gave their valuable collection to the college. The couple met as students at St. Olaf, and they both credit the two-semester art history course taught by Arnold Flaten (Class of 1922), founder of the St. Olaf Art Department, with having "changed our lives" as they learned about the world of art.

Skibbe, who wrote the books *Yoshida Hodaka: The Magic of Art and Yoshida Toshi: Nature, Art, and Peace* (about Hodaka's brother), recalls liking Hodaka since they first met in 1987. "He wanted to be different from his father, Hiroshi, and his older brother, Toshi, who were in the vein of romantic realism," he said, explaining that Hodaka's artistic vision was shaped by a 1950 visit to a museum of primitive art in New York and by genuine primitive art he saw in Mexico.

Skibbe is survived by his wife, Margaret, their sons, Stephen and Jonathan '86, and five grandchildren, James '10 and Margaret Checco, and Kayla '16, Hannah, and Ava Skibbe. Their daughter Katharine, a Minneapolis middle school teacher, passed away on Oct. 7, 2019.

## Remembering Jim Dunlop

Professor Emeritus of Romance Languages James "Jim" Dunlop passed away on October 5, 2019, at age 81. Dunlop graduated from Mankato High School in 1955 and attended Carleton College, where he majored in Spanish. He graduated from Carleton in June of 1959 and married his wife, Judy, that same month. They lived and worked in the Minneapolis area while Dunlop continued his education at the University of Minnesota, where he earned both a master's degree and Ph.D. in Spanish literature. He accepted a position as a Spanish professor at St. Olaf in 1968, where he taught until his retirement on December 31, 2002.

During his tenure at St. Olaf, Dunlop served as chair of the Department of Romance Languages and Division of Language and Literature, and was instrumental in helping the college's Spanish program achieve its high level of excellence, says his former colleague León Navárez. He also co-led international study programs with Professor Emeritus of Art Mac Gimse '58 and led the popular Semester in Seville, Spain.

In his obituary, Dunlop's family shared, "Jim lived life to the fullest. He was an avid outdoorsman and loved spending time with family. He had a great sense of humor and enjoyed both telling and listening to stories about family exploits and adventures. He had a life-long love and affection for dogs. After his retirement, Jim and Judy acquired a team of sled dogs that they cared for and mushed recreationally on their property south of Northfield. This hobby was a source of joy, companionship, and daily activity for them up until the time of Jim's death."

He is survived by Judy, their sons, Steven (Jeanne) and Brian (Sheri) Dunlop, and many grandchildren.



Kathrine "Kathie" Petersen Moen '64, Seattle, Sept. 25, 2019  
 Nancy Hansen Peterson '64, Bridgewater, Vt., Aug. 26, 2019  
 Delores "Lori" Larson Blatzheim '65, Glendora, Calif., Sept. 26, 2019  
 Kenneth Kostial '65, Longville, Minn., Aug. 16, 2019  
 Josiah Meyer '65, Richmond, Calif., March 9, 2019  
 Frederick "Fred" Russler '65, Appleton, Wis., Oct. 23, 2019  
 Rhoda Sommerville Anderson '66, Las Cruces, N.M., Oct. 3, 2019  
 Sandra "Sandy" Gunkelman Hertel '67, Fargo, N.D., Oct. 21, 2019  
 Dean Wigstrom '67, Puyallup, Wash., Oct. 13, 2019  
 Carol Idso Forster '68, Tucson, Ariz., Oct. 17, 2019  
 Nancy Benson '69, Fort Worth, Texas, Aug. 19, 2019  
 Robert Forsythe '69, Lees Summit, Mo., July 31, 2019  
 Roald Rolfson '69, Duxbury, Mass., Sept. 25, 2019  
 Warren Bryce '70, Beach Park, Ill., July 19, 2019  
 Kristin Peterson Kaiser '72, Richfield, Minn., Oct. 29, 2019  
 Richard Herreid '73, Austin, Minn., Nov. 1, 2019  
 Ann Rafshol '74, Minneapolis, Sept. 27, 2019  
 Eugene Freeman '75, Dundas, Minn., Oct. 20, 2019  
 Daniel Bearss '76, Washington, D.C., July 5, 2019  
 David "Gus" Gustafson '78, Middleton, Wis., Sept. 11, 2019  
 Charles "Scott" Massie '78, St. Louis Park, Minn., March 15, 2019  
 \*Timothy Guth '80, La Crosse, Wis., Sept. 27, 2019  
 Kennedy Lemke '84, Northfield, Minn., Sept. 8, 2019  
 Renae Dishman Ronayne '84, Faribault, Minn., July 8, 2019  
 Katharine Sween '85, St. Paul, Minn., Aug. 17, 2019  
 Thomas Nordlie '87, Mound, Minn., July 15, 2019  
 Alexander "Alex" Harner '95, Astoria, N.Y., Oct. 16, 2019  
 Jessica Jones Daly '00, Chicago, Aug. 21, 2019  
 William Berne '09, Blackduck, Minn., Sept. 24, 2019  
 Jake Rebhan '19, Northfield, Minn., Sept. 19, 2019

\* VETERAN

### CORRECTION

Having all of his children and several of his grandchildren attend St. Olaf College is part of longtime swimming and diving coach Dave Hauck's legacy. Dave, who passed away July 13, 2019, was survived by his wife of 65 years, Mary; their three children, **Tad Hauck '80** and his wife, **Carol DuBose Hauck '82**, **Elizabeth Hauck Fulton '83** and her husband, Bill Fulton, and **Robert "Bob" Hauck '87** and his wife, **Karna Olson Hauck '91**; as well as nine grandchildren, Jason and Sara Hauck; **Emma Fulton '16** and **Maria Fulton '18**; and Cullen, Tatum, Signe, Marcus, and Josie Hauck.

# Ole Tyme Trivia

BY JEFF SAUVE

**W**HO KNEW THAT January 4 is National Trivia Day? Surprisingly, myriad unofficial U.S. national holidays mark the calendar year, including National Milk Day (January 11), Toothache Day (February 9), No Socks Day (May 8), and Count Your Buttons Day (October 21).

Where trivia is concerned, St. Olaf College is steeped in quirky facts from its 145-year history. For instance, do you know which St. Olaf student (1875–76) was closely linked to the 1919 National Prohibition Act? (U.S. House Judiciary Chair Andrew Volstead, one of the men behind the law, which was informally known as the Volstead Act) Or can you say which fictitious town Betty White’s character hailed from in the popular TV series *The Golden Girls* (1985–92)? (St. Olaf, Minnesota)

Perhaps one of the tougher Ole trivia questions might be this one: What was the original name of “Pop Hill” behind Thorson Hall? The answer traces its roots to 1878, when the fledgling St. Olaf’s School (later renamed St. Olaf College) moved from the corner at Union and Third streets to the top of Manitou Heights.

At the time, a German brewer named Adolph Grafmueller lived a few cow pastures away from the school. He sold his suds outside the city’s limits (what today would be Greenvale Avenue near the Rolf Mellby soccer field), at the base of the bluff below Ellingson and Thorson Halls on the St. Olaf campus. In the coming years, the college administration came to view this nearby “groggery” as the “Devil on your doorstep.”

Unfazed by the college’s disapproval, Grafmueller expanded his enterprise in the mid-1800s by enlarging a natural sandstone cave beneath the bluff. He carved out two rooms for beer manufacturing and storage and created what St. Olaf students nicknamed “Brewery Hill.” That answers the trivia question, but the story doesn’t end there.

By 1890, Grafmueller had also added an enticing beer garden, complete with imitation palm trees. The place was described as “very wild, rough, and rowdy” and featured lively entertainment. Like moths to a flame, St. Olaf’s young men simply could not stay away and occasionally “inspected” the establishment on the sly.

In fact, the Ole men even raided cases of beer by shimmying down ropes placed in the cave’s air ventilation duct. It would all come to a head sooner or later, especially after Grafmueller sold his brewery in 1897 to the unscrupulous Herman Wenner and his wife, who illegally sold liquor on Sundays and to minors.

Because the college wanted the liquor traffic out of Northfield, Professor Paul M. Glasoe pretended to be a customer in an effort to secure samples. He later attended a court hearing with Professor Carl Mellby, in June 1904, after Wenner had been charged with peddling beer without a license.



OLD MAIN SITS ABOVE A LOCAL FARM, CIRCA 1890. AT LEFT, THE ENTRANCE TO THE POP HILL CAVE.

In a 1961 student interview, Professor Mellby, then age 92, recalled the hearing in which Wenner and his wife defended the brewery by saying that they made and sold a valuable health drug. According to Mellby, the exchange between Northfield Judge John C. Couper and Mrs. Herman Wenner was more than trivial:

“Do you sell that to college boys?” demanded Judge Couper.

“Yes,” she said. “It makes them strong, healthy.”

At the close of the case, several statements were made by Professor Glasoe, causing Mrs. Wenner, age 70, to become quite heated. When Judge Couper pronounced a sentence of \$20, she rushed toward the professor and began chasing him all over the room. Glasoe was afraid to leave for fear that she might catch up with him, and managed to dodge her by going around and around until she became exhausted.

A couple days later, Mrs. Wenner called on College President John N. Kildahl. Once again, Professor Mellby was present and recalled the terse conversation:

“Mr. President, that was a grand injustice!”

“No, you broke the law.”

At this point, the indignant Mrs. Wenner pleaded, “But your boys have money and can pay for it. It’s good drink. It’ll make them better Christians!” Kildahl was unconvinced. The Wenners finally sold their brewery business in 1920.

The name Brewery Hill remained until Prohibition. In 1923, the Northfield Bottling Corporation took possession of the property and established a soft drink works in the cave, after which the name changed to Pop Hill. The college purchased the old brewery property in the mid-1950s, and by the mid-1980s, the cave had been permanently demolished for safety reasons. To this day, St. Olaf remains a dry campus. And local craft breweries are thriving in downtown Northfield. 🍺

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



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PARTING SHOT

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TOM ROSTER

**BRIGHT SPOT** | A male northern cardinal — the most dazzling of the nonmigratory songbirds — brings a welcome splash of color to campus on a gray winter day.