

SPRING/SUMMER 2021

ST. OLAF

M A G A Z I N E



ON THE COVER

After a long and challenging year, new growth and renewed hope have returned to the St. Olaf campus.

PHOTO BY HONGYE LYU '21

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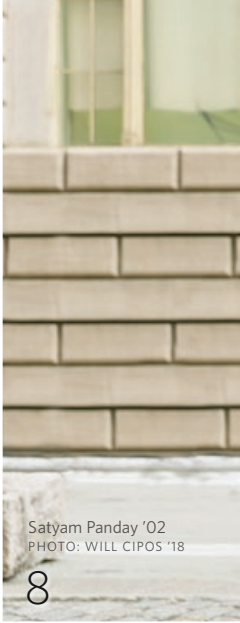
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FROM THE DESK OF
PRESIDENT DAVID R. ANDERSON '74



Greetings, Oles!

Welcome to this issue of *St. Olaf Magazine*. If you've been following my communications these past 15 years, you know that I am focused on outcomes. St. Olaf College exists to prepare its students for productive, fulfilling, and useful lives. Those are outcomes you can measure, and we do. Sometimes that measurement is quantitative, and other times qualitative. This issue of the magazine is all about the qualitative measurement of our outcomes through storytelling.

"The Power of a Liberal Arts Education" lays out the reasons why we believe a liberal arts education is the best way to produce the outcomes we desire, and — together with "Making an Impact" — tells the stories of Oles who are succeeding in their careers while making meaningful contributions to their communities and to the world.

Oles like Branden Moriarity '07, who is developing new cellular therapeutics for treating cancer and genetic diseases at the University of Minnesota's Moriarity Lab; and Novia Josiah-Isaac '12, a social worker and mental health case manager for the Center for Victims of Torture, who is helping refugees recover from trauma; and Mark Jansen '90, CEO of the world's largest almond producing company, who notes that his education at St. Olaf laid the foundation for his success in business; and Apoorva Pasricha '14, who is solving complex problems at the intersection of the public, private, and social sectors in San Francisco; and Elizabeth Turner '06, who is building intentional, resilient, and equitable communities that fit clients' priorities and budgets.

These are inspiring stories. There are countless other ones like them that could be told about Oles everywhere.

"Following the Dream" and "A Knack for Nurturing Community" shift the focus from telling stories about Oles to two Oles who tell stories about others, one as a photojournalist, the other as a writer. Storytellers give what Shakespeare called "a local habitation and a name" to issues we should care about, experiences we should take into account, emotions we should engage with. They help us to better understand ourselves and the world around us.

This has been a challenging year for all of us, and challenges remain ahead of us. It's reassuring in times like these to know that our college is using the power of the liberal arts to prepare the visionaries, the planners, the problem solvers, and the doers who will meet those challenges and change our world.

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



UM! YAH! YAH!



The Ole Avenue Project

Building for a Stronger Future

A vibrant residential experience is a defining part of a St. Olaf education. The Ole Avenue Project is a plan to build a new 300-bed residence hall on the south side of St. Olaf Avenue and additional town house-style residences with 140 student beds to replace the houses on the north side of St. Olaf Avenue. In addition to creating a new gateway to the college on the eastern edge of the campus, the project will help St. Olaf address a three-decades-long housing shortage — which has been made even more acute during the COVID-19 pandemic — and improve the residential experience.

Traditional residence hall-style housing remains the most optimal for students' mental health. The new residence hall and townhouses, which are designed to meet the needs of current and future Oles, will also meet today's standards for fire safety, accessibility, egress, indoor air quality, and other essentials, including a more gender inclusive approach to student housing. Renovations to existing residence halls on campus will reduce overcrowding and restore important community spaces. Students have helped inform the development of the Ole Avenue project over the past two years by participating in surveys, focus groups, and community meetings about the college's existing on-campus housing and needs for the future. Occupancy is anticipated in the fall of 2022.

Living together in community lies at the core of the Ole experience, and we are recognizing that fact by making this bold investment in the future of St. Olaf.

See what's going on at the construction site! stolaf.edu/OleAvenue



Reflections from a year spent on campus

Art history and quantitative economics major Hongye Lyu '21 shares her perspective of living on the Hill during the pandemic and facing the uncertainties of travel restrictions, visa status, and grad school as an international student. The experiences of our international students varied widely during the pandemic, and for many, this last year has been painful and challenging.

By Hongye Lyu '21

Hongye Lyu captured a prism of color in the snow on a January morning at sunrise.

Winter 2020

2020 had a rough start. Two weeks after I said goodbye to my family in China and returned to campus, I was shocked by all the news from back home, which made me feel so anxious like I never had before.

Thousands of posts were shared on social media about the seriousness of the new contagious coronavirus and the lack of essential supplies in the health care sector. I cannot remember exactly what happened in my life at that time; I can only recall the feeling of apprehension and helplessness.

In January 2020, people were trying to celebrate the Chinese New Year, but the pandemic changed everything. My friends back home even started asking me if I could mail back masks for them. My family only told me they were doing okay when I asked.

I felt so isolated from home — being willing to help, yet unable. I wanted to do something for them but did not know how or what I should do. My anxiety and worries had never been stronger than when I was physically apart from my family. My mom kept me updated that my family was safe by showing me her homemade dishes every day.

Everyone was asked to stay at home to stop the spread of the virus. Weeks after COVID-19 was discovered, with several lockdown orders imposed, everything seemed under control. While the societal quarantine was still intense, I did not feel as anxious as I did in the beginning, and I was hoping everything could go back to normal by summer so I could still be able to travel back home.

Spring 2020

As the spring semester started, I was busy rehearsing for the Lunar New Year Celebration on campus and working on my heavy coursework. The beginning of that spring semester was as normal as it was for any other, in that I built up a new schedule to balance study and activities, but it was weighed down by more worries about my home situation.

The Chinese Cultural Club started posting donation information on campus for public hospitals in China to get enough essential supplies. There were performances in the Lunar New Year Celebration to commemorate heroes who devoted themselves during the breakout of COVID-19.

While I thought that the severe situation back home was gradually getting under control, I was aghast at the updates of the global spread of the coronavirus. The number of confirmed cases in each country had grown every day, first in Europe and Asia, and then gradually increased in the United States.

I never expected that I would experience similar anxiety and uncertainty again within three months. My friends on campus started talking about what was posted on social media and kept checking the number of confirmed cases frequently. We saw many large universities close due to the dramatic spread of COVID-19, while flight tickets became more and more expensive. It seemed that going back home would not be an option anymore.

In the first half of March, there were rumors and anxieties around me and my friend circle. We did not know what we should do but just waited for the college's announcement. After the college announced an extended spring break, with the possibility of returning to finish out the spring semester, some of my international friends started planning to fly back home.

The last week before spring break was chaotic. Many in-person events were canceled without much

notice, and many classes were moved online or canceled. International students were hesitating about whether to travel or stay because of the rigorous visa regulations and having ambiguous plans after the break. Most of us, the international students, chose to stay because we could not afford the high flight price and were afraid that we might lose our eligibility to hold a student visa at that time. I gave up checking flight tickets and decided to stay at least until the end of the final week of the semester, as I hoped to launch my independent research project and wait for the results of an application I'd submitted for a curatorial internship at the Library of Congress.

During spring break, I experienced quietness on campus unlike anything else in my three years at St. Olaf. Almost 80 percent of the students left, so I got the chance to walk around campus with only one or two friends. I even found my camera in the closet, which had been missing for the first few years of college, so I was able to record the empty campus with all the young plants growing and reemerging in the warmer weather. I felt so peaceful while I was taking photos and hanging out with small groups of friends, but it was also intense because the quarantine order was imposed and everyone felt a sense of nervousness. Being Chinese, it was so upsetting to see some in society discriminate against Asian people because



Hongye Lyu (left, with Natalia Granquist '21) spent much of Spring Break 2020 documenting the changes of the season on an unnaturally quiet campus.

of the coronavirus. I started worrying about my own safety and tried to support others on social media.

After spring break, the online learning period began. I am so glad that one of my professors provided us a virtual space online to share our thoughts and struggles. I felt supported by my classmates and teachers. I adapted to the new style of learning quickly and started to plan what I should do after graduation. I started writing my large research paper and also worked with other classmates virtually on course projects. I stopped checking social media frequently so that I was able to focus on my academic work unbothered. I found that working hard really stopped me from being anxious and thinking too much. That's one way I've been able to calm down during the pandemic.

During the spring semester, we students who stayed on campus were not required to wear a mask but were asked not to leave. While we were not actually faced with a shortage of life essentials, we were affected both physically and mentally. The campus created a safe space to live during those first few intense months, but what happened outside this bubble did change our lives a lot.

Summer 2020

Going back home became more and more difficult so I chose to stay on campus for summer break. I was initially offered the curatorial internship at the Library of Congress and planned to work there for the summer, but like many things, it was canceled due to the pandemic. Instead, I undertook a virtual internship and launched my independent research in art history to stay busy and build my résumé.

There was no huge difference between spring and summer. I still followed a regular schedule for doing work and had things to study. I also continued taking photos around campus and hanging out with similar friends. Watching plants on campus grow and change was of great interest to me, and for the first time I was able to record it with pictures and experience warm weather in Minnesota.

For me, the summer of 2020 was boring but also full of funny stories. In the middle of July, the temperature got crazy high but my dorm was not equipped with air conditioning, so the Office of Student Life opened the Pause for us to stay overnight during the hottest weeks, which made me feel like I was back in high school summer camp. I stayed in the Jungle Room and slept on the couch for that week with my other friends. When I think about this experience right now, it is awkwardly funny; back then it made us feel like junior high students.

Fall 2020

As time flew by, the beginning of the fall semester was also tough for me. After almost half a year of staying on campus with a small group of students, the reopening plan made me adjust my life again by imposing strict rules to follow. I was afraid that we would not be able to go back to in-person classes, and I started worrying about the near future after graduation.

The hybrid course schedule made my daily routine as regular as semesters before the outbreak of COVID-19. However, the strict rules on campus kept reminding everyone that we were still in a global pandemic. While most of my friends were on campus, we followed all the social-distance requirements to ensure the continuity of the in-person semester plan.

I never expected that the pandemic would affect every aspect of my life like that. I planned to apply for doctoral programs this year, so I launched my independent research in the summer to prepare myself for doctoral studies. However, because of the financial hardship caused by the pandemic, many graduate schools closed their humanities programs for admission. I was forced to rethink what I want to do in the future, if not attending an art history doctoral program. Even though the pandemic made me change my postgraduate plans rapidly, it still provides me



Hongye Lyu graduated with the Class of 2021 in May at the first in-person Commencement since 2019.

another opportunity to deeply consider what I am really interested in or what kind of career is most suitable for me. As I am always told, every coin has two sides. While I was anxious about future plans, the slowdown of life on the Hill left me space to reexamine my plan and future with careful consideration.

Looking Ahead 2021

When I recall my memories from the past year, they are full of anxiety but also happiness. While I am still far away from home, I have received care from my friends, supervisors, and professors. This year is uncertain and scary, but the limited social activities allowed me to focus more on my own life and future plan. As for now, I am admitted to several master's degree programs, including in art history and health care administration. My double majors in art history and quantitative economics, plus internship experience, make me eligible to explore career plans in two extremely different fields. While I have not made my final decision, my arrival at this career decision will definitely be a considered result of what I have undergone in the past year.

Moreover, I am always hoping that I will be able to travel back home once I am vaccinated and the U.S. travel ban gets lifted. In my last semester at St. Olaf, I got used to the new format of life on the Hill, but do miss the pre-pandemic time a lot. [My final] semester is not as busy as I expected, so I have more time to experience spring on this pretty campus, as well as spending more time with my close friends (with social distancing and remaining within a small friend bubble, of course). I am also hoping to have a Commencement in person to officially say goodbye to St. Olaf.

The past year is like a unique adventure in my life. I would never want to experience this again, but I will consider what happened this year to be a great treasure in my life. 🍂

\$1.1 million gift to support student experience, with a focus on equity and inclusion

ST. OLAF COLLEGE HAS RECEIVED a \$1.1 million gift to support the student experience on campus, with a focus on advancing equity and inclusion. The donors, who wish to remain anonymous, make this gift following their investment in the college's George Floyd Fellowship for Social Change last year.

Their gift provides \$150,000 over the next three years to immediately fund initiatives directed by the college's vice president for equity and inclusion, such as antiracism education and faculty/staff retention. It also provides funds for the hire of a retention specialist for students. The remainder of their gift will create an endowed fund that will initially support Supplemental Instruction (SI), and then will continue to support work to advance equity and inclusion. These funds will especially help strengthen inclusion for first-generation students, students from low-income households, and students, staff, and faculty of color.

"We are most grateful for this gift," says St. Olaf President David R. Anderson '74. "The donors were especially motivated to improve the student experience for Oles who are from marginalized groups. Their generous support will give us the ability to begin new initiatives immediately and the flexibility to support our continuing work in years ahead."

"Marginalized members of our community, specifically Black, Indigenous, and People of Color [BIPOC], have a lower sense of belonging at the college," says Vice President for Equity and Inclusion María Pabón Gautier, who served as the inaugural director of the college's Taylor Center for Equity and Inclusion. "There is a lot we can do as a community to increase inclusion, agency, and connection."

Pabón says these funds will play an important role in supporting the retention and inclusion of staff and faculty of color; enhancing learning opportunities for staff, students, and faculty; increasing support for staff and faculty who are advancing efforts within the campus community; and enhancing student support.

"The new retention specialist will focus their energy and attention into understanding our students' experiences, then helping direct our response to support them where needed," says Vice President for Student Life Hassel Morrison. "This will help all our students thrive."

Initially, over the next three years, earnings from the new endowed fund will support Supplemental Instruction sections for historically difficult courses. While all participants benefit from SI, it has the greatest positive impact for students from groups underserved by education. Since 2016, the SI program has expanded from 43 sections to 125, providing 15,236 contact hours for over 1,200 students (or 40 percent of the college) each year.

"Our academic enrichment specialist, Nayeli Trujillo, has done a great job with this program," says Director of Advising and Academic Support Kathy Glampe. "We have found that SI has been especially important to students this year. With COVID-19 restrictions, it is harder to meet other students in classes, create study groups, or even find a person with whom you can study due to masking and social distancing. In addition to helping academically, SI also helps Oles make supportive friends."

These actions are part of several initiatives the college is undertaking to address inequity. News about these actions can be found on the college's website. More will be identified as this work continues to advance. 🦁



María Pabón Gautier (front row, right) marches with members of the St. Olaf community on Martin Luther King Jr. Day in January 2020.

"The work of diversity, equity, inclusion, and antiracism is many times underfunded and built on the backs of those who are impacted or [who] care for it. This gift allows us to change that narrative and support the efforts, ideas, and work that will make us a stronger, more equitable, and inclusive community."

— MARÍA PABÓN GAUTIER

— DAN RIEHLE-MERRILL

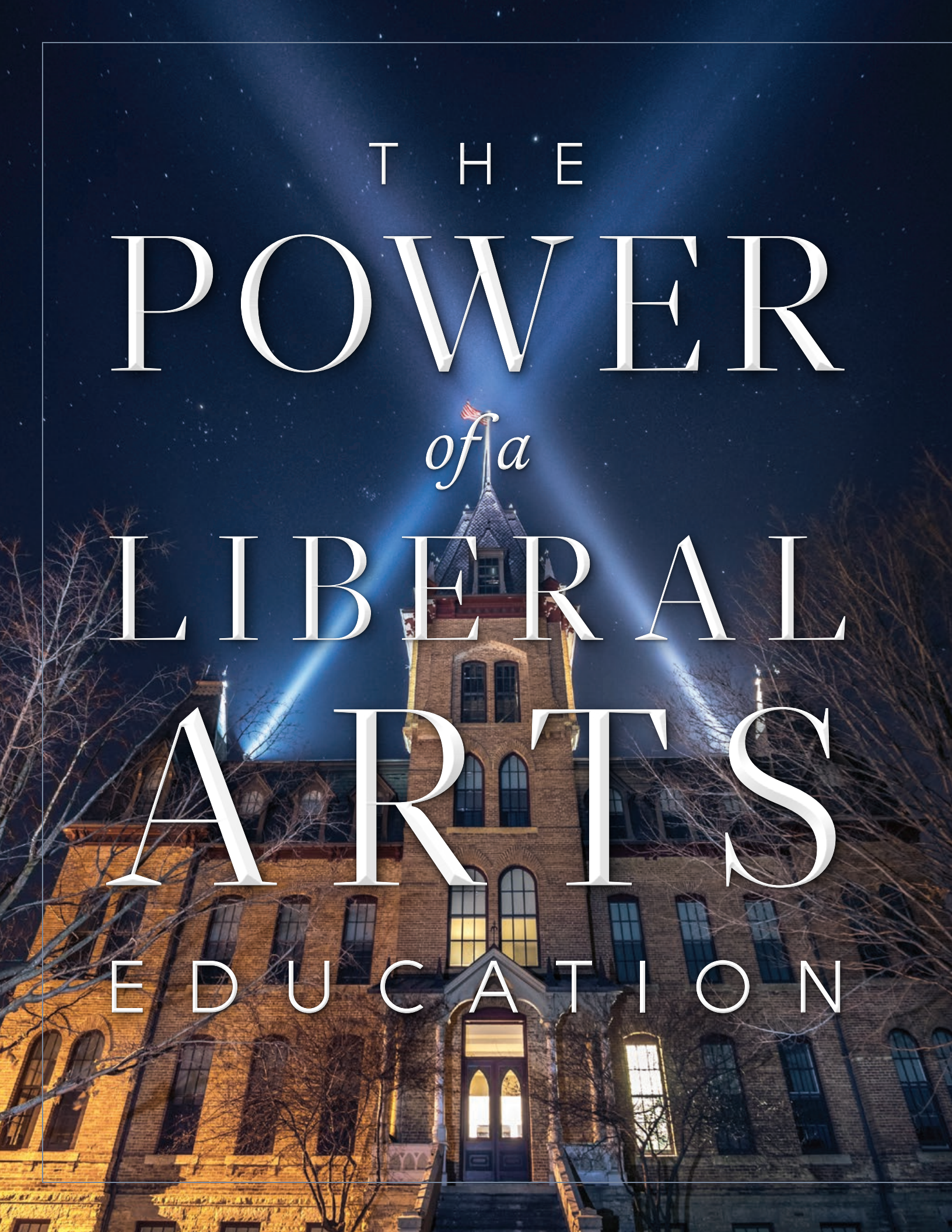
THE
POWER

of a

LIBERAL

ARTS

EDUCATION



THE CONCEPTS THAT SERVE AS THE FOUNDATION
FOR A LIBERAL ARTS EDUCATION HAVE STOOD
THE TEST OF TIME — FOR GOOD REASON.
AT ST. OLAF, STUDENTS USE THESE SKILLS TO
PREPARE FOR AND EXCEL AT WHATEVER THEY
CHOOSE TO PURSUE BEYOND GRADUATION.

BY ERIN PETERSON

PHOTO BY EVAN PAK '19

SATYAM PANDAY '02, a senior economist for S&P Global, is charged with developing macroeconomic forecasts and risks to growth for the U.S. and Canadian economies. It's challenging work in normal times, but as the COVID-19 virus accelerated last spring, he found himself in uniquely uncharted territory. How could he and his team predict the economic impact of a once-in-a-century pandemic? The moment required him to think expansively about the factors that might influence what would come next for the economy.

For that reason, Panday says, St. Olaf prepared him well. Last year, he spent time learning about the unique psychological impact of COVID-19. He studied the history of pandemics and drew on his deep knowledge of geography and globalization. He paired those insights with the more traditional research he often did on public policy actions and monetary policy. "The liberal arts framework of thinking about things gives you the basis to analyze events from more than just a mathematical point of view," he says. "That extra layer is what can distinguish you from a regular forecaster and will help you be successful."



CHAMPIONS OF A LIBERAL ARTS EDUCATION like to say that it doesn't prepare you for *a* job, it prepares you for almost any job. That's important: according to data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, students will change jobs more than a dozen times between graduation and retirement. Many of the jobs that current students will hold in the future don't yet exist. There's plenty of evidence to suggest that the toolkit of skills developed through a liberal arts education — rather than a single, narrow certification — is a good hedge against future uncertainty.

And 2020 brought us plenty of uncertainty. In a particularly prescient speech at the 2012 Council of Independent Colleges Presidents Institute event, St. Olaf President David R. Anderson '74 made the case for the liberal arts in exactly those terms. "[A] liberal arts education best prepares you to flourish in an unknown future because it is not tied to a specific version of the present," he said. "[It allows you] to understand the geography of human knowledge so that you are able to recognize a problem and know what kinds of questions you can ask to best yield insights."

The liberal arts may not be the easiest path for students to take. They take classes that may be beyond what they might otherwise feel most comfortable taking. They work hard to develop and communicate their own ideas clearly. They ask hard questions about what they believe — about the world and about themselves. It requires them to embrace the uncertainty that is inherent in the future.

But when students put themselves through this particular intellectual crucible, they have the tools to succeed in their careers, whatever that may look like. And perhaps even more important, they have the tools to find personal fulfillment in their lives.

“A liberal arts education is about more than ‘checking the boxes.’ It allows you to ask: How do I want to make an impact? How can I help others? How do I define ‘being fulfilled?’”

— LOVE ODETOLA '14

Satyam Panday says that the liberal arts education he received at St. Olaf developed his openness and interest in the world. “The diversity of classes that I took nurtured my curiosity for all kinds of topics,” he says. “That has stayed with me to this day.”

Students choose a liberal arts education in part because it fosters curiosity, engagement, and thoughtfulness. Students with degrees from St. Olaf are prepared not just for the responsibilities of citizenship and cultural fluency, but for rewarding and purposeful careers and lives.

The results of St. Olaf’s approach to education bear out the wisdom of this approach. Internal surveys at St. Olaf found that 95 percent of 2020 graduates were employed, enrolled in graduate school, or engaged in full-time service within nine months of graduation. More broadly, according to the most recent Higher Education Data Sharing Consortium (HEDS) survey, 84 percent of alumni report they have found satisfying jobs and 79 percent report that their job leverages the skills they developed at St. Olaf.

Kirsten Cahoon '98, senior associate director for Employer and Alumni Relations at the Piper Center for Vocation and Career, sees the individuals behind these statistics up close. As part of her role, she helps connect students to employers in a range of different industries — and knows exactly how valuable a liberal arts education is to employers.

For many companies, Oles represent the ideal job candidates. Employers know that St. Olaf graduates learn quickly and can excel in new and changing or ambiguous environments. But even more than that, Oles bring a skill set to jobs that, over time, will help them transition to positions demanding greater responsibility and leadership. It’s why Fortune 500 companies, from Amazon to UnitedHealth Group to U.S. Bank, are among the top employers of St. Olaf graduates. “It’s true that some employers want a short-term ‘plug and play’ fix,” Cahoon acknowledges. “But managers in organizations who look at the longer range appreciate our students for their broader problem-solving skills. They want someone who looks at the world from a more interdisciplinary lens, and someone who is curious and holistic in their approach.”

Bobby Hunter '08, the CFO of the Individual Medicare Advantage Business at UnitedHealth Group, says he’s always thrilled to hire Oles as part of his team — even though graduates with more specialized degrees, such as accounting or finance, may seem like a more obvious fit. “Oles come to the table with a broad and diversified skill set that allows them to take on many different challenges and develop many areas of expertise,” he says, rather than relying on a more tailored set of technical skills that might result from a more specialized degree. “At St. Olaf, you learn how to learn and you learn how to be successful.”



Oles are often so accustomed to picking up new skills and adapting them that they sometimes need a reminder about how valuable these traits are to employers, says Hunter. “Yes, students with specialized degrees in finance or accounting are often able to transition nicely into roles that require such skills,” he says. “But these roles evolve, and the question becomes: Can you navigate through complex and unforeseen challenges? Can you build and implement a successful strategy? Can you communicate effectively and find common ground between people who have opposing views? That’s where you really see the liberal arts skill set kick in.”

Love Odetola ’14, currently a Ph.D. student in public health at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, has a growing appreciation for the skill set that her St. Olaf coursework gave her. Through the classes she took as part of the five-course Great Conversation sequence, for example, she honed an ability to think about big ideas, question her own beliefs, and write and speak with clarity and nuance. “The Great Conversation courses were crucial for me,” she says.

Odetola says these skills laid the foundation for graduate school, enabling her to pick up complex public health concepts quickly, even as her peers sometimes struggled. “I realized that some people had a hard time seeing the bigger picture,” she says. “For me, the concepts we were learning just made sense.”

CHRIS PARADISE ’14 HAD SPENT YEARS of his life planning to become a doctor, and his biology degree from St. Olaf prepared him well for that path. But during a gap year at a Mayo Clinic research lab, he realized he was far more interested in exploring where research could take him. He decided to change course, ultimately pursuing a Ph.D. in molecular pharmacology and experimental therapeutics rather than an M.D.

Dean of Admissions and Financial Aid Chris George ’94 says these kinds of pivots are common and should be welcomed. A liberal arts education exposes people to many different ideas and perspectives, and this naturally leads many students to change or expand their own ideas about what is possible for themselves. “Students are surrounded by people who are curious, who ask interesting questions, and who challenge them in different ways,” he says. “That liberal arts approach of inquiry and questioning doesn’t just enhance the college experience. It helps people understand what is important to them.”

Years after deciding to pursue a different path, Paradise is now a senior analytical scientist at Rion. The biotechnology startup, linked to Mayo Clinic, focuses on regenerative therapies that may help treat conditions such as cardiovascular disease. Even now,



“A liberal arts education best prepares you to flourish in an unknown future because it is not tied to a specific version of the present.”

— ST. OLAF PRESIDENT DAVID R. ANDERSON '74

his liberal arts degree continues to pay dividends. While his Ph.D. gives him the knowledge he needs to excel in the technical aspects of his work, his liberal arts degree offers him the wider view that is essential in a startup environment.

“I don’t operate in a void,” Paradise says. “I’m in a position that requires me to interact with a wide array of people, from business development to quality assurance. I have to think about the ethics of patient care. I have to communicate with the general public and provide accurate information,” he says. “The economics and ethics courses I took at St. Olaf help me navigate those things. And I use the writing and verbal communication skills I learned on a daily basis.”

Because of its interdisciplinary nature, a liberal arts education also is particularly valuable in careers that demand a holistic approach to problem solving. Nicole Novak '08, an epidemiologist and public health researcher at the University of Iowa, says that her own work draws heavily on the knowledge of many different disciplines.

Her research analyzes how certain types of immigration enforcement — immigration arrests, raids, and detentions, for example — can lead to health issues such as chronic stress among those who experience these events.

To study the topic, she draws on all three of her majors — environmental studies, Spanish, and Hispanic studies — as well as her concentration in statistics. She adds that her study abroad experiences in Guatemala, El Salvador, and Nicaragua have given her a useful background because they are the home countries of many of the people she works with today. These undergraduate hands-on experiences were further enhanced when, as a 2008 Rhodes Scholar, Novak pursued graduate work at Oxford University, earning master of science degrees in medical anthropology and global health science.

The value of her liberal arts education comes not just from being able to draw on expertise from a range of disciplines but also from using them to ask bigger, more useful questions. “If you’re thinking about health problems only at an individual level, you might ask if the problem is that individuals with a certain health problem are ill-informed or if they’re making ‘bad’ decisions,” she says. “But that’s not the only way to think about it. You could also think: What are the policies and social environments that constrain this group of people? What is the history that led this group of people to be in this specific circumstance? What are the structural conditions that could have shaped behavior?”

At the same time, Novak recognizes that the larger systems she studies affect real people. “I never want to lose sight of the fact that each person is unique, with their own stories and perspectives,” she says. It is not enough to consider only individuals, just as it is not enough to look only at larger policies and systems.”

Novak’s ability to understand how a range of different elements, from individual choices to public policies, intersect and affect one another gives her greater insight into the big questions and possible solutions to issues in her field. “Public health is inherently a [subject that requires] a multilevel approach,” she says. “And that’s part of what makes it such a great field for someone with a liberal arts background.”

“A liberal arts degree helps people think big,” says Odetola, “beyond the next good grade, beyond the next step on the career ladder, beyond a specific level of financial success. A liberal arts education is about more than ‘checking the boxes.’ It allows you to ask: How do I want to make an impact? How can I help others? How do I define ‘being fulfilled?’ Those are questions I had to answer that have made the most difference in my life.” 🍷

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

Making an Impact

Oles steeped in the liberal arts bring immense value to their communities and to their workplaces — a wider perspective and nimbleness of mind that sparks creativity and informs complex problem solving. They have the ability to develop bold new ideas and the capacity to work collaboratively with people who are different from themselves. They are compassionate, engaged, and thoughtful citizens of the world.

Profiles by **Marla Hill Holt '88**

Branden Moriarity '07 is developing new cellular therapeutics for treating cancer and genetic diseases.

As director of the University of Minnesota's Moriarity Lab, Branden Moriarity's cutting-edge work in developing and translating to the clinical setting novel cellular therapeutics for gene therapy and cancer immunotherapy has garnered widespread attention.

"Almost all of the new therapies we're developing are based on engineering cells," Moriarity says. "For gene therapy, we change the genetic code of cells to cure genetic diseases. For cancer immunotherapy, we change the genetic code of immune cells to train them to hunt down and kill cancer. We're also heavily involved in taking the therapies from 'bench to bedside,' as the therapies developed in the lab are translated into clinical trials for testing in patients."

In addition to running the lab, Moriarity is an assistant professor in the Department of Pediatrics/Division of Pediatric Hematology and Oncology at the University of Minnesota Medical School. He holds academic appointments in three of the university's graduate programs: Microbiology, Immunology, and Cancer Biology; Molecular, Cellular, Developmental Biology, and Genetics; and the Comparative and Molecular Biosciences. These are in addition to appointments in the university's Stem Cell Institute, the Center for Genome Engineering, and the Masonic Cancer Center, where he co-directs the Genome Engineering Shared Resource.

"I've been interested in cancer research since I started in the sciences," Moriarity says. "Everyone knows someone — or is someone — who has had cancer, so that's what drives me. Also, there's a huge need for good treatments for advanced cancer."

The Moriarity Lab currently employs four postdoctoral fellows, eleven Ph.D. candidates, and numerous research technicians and undergraduate assistants. In 2014, researchers at the lab discovered semaphorin 4D (SEMA4D), a gene that may cause osteosarcoma, a malignant bone tumor found in children and adolescents. Moriarity and his team partnered with the biotechnology company Vaccinex, which had developed an experimental antibody that could block SEMA4D's activity and activate a productive immune response to fight off the cancer. Together they are conducting clinical trials at 22 institutions across the country.

"We're just wrapping up trials of a single drug therapy that we tested for safety," Moriarity says. The therapy was found to be safe and well tolerated, paving the way for a multi-drug, follow-up trial to test efficacy. "It's exciting work, because antibody treatments don't have the toxic side effects of traditional chemotherapy."

The Moriarity Lab conducts between 12 and 15 projects at a time, largely focused on creating new cellular-based therapeutics for cancer and genetic diseases. One current project, a trial involving patients with highly metastatic gastrointestinal cancer, is particularly inspiring, Moriarity says. "It's the first time that we're developing something that might cure people who would otherwise perish," he says. "It's pretty incredible to be developing a therapy for people who have no other treatment options." The trial has already treated two patients and will be expanding to treat an additional 20 patients this year.

Advancements in genome editing tools have also enabled the lab to work toward treatments that have the potential to cure certain genetic diseases, such as sickle cell disease, fanconi anemia, and severe combined immunodeficiency. "Current treatments use donor cells for bone marrow transplant, with a high risk of morbidity/mortality, but we are now correcting the patient's own stem cells and using them for the bone marrow transplant, making the treatment more effective and safer," he says.

Moriarity originally intended to be a German major at St. Olaf, but he fell in love with science after taking his first college-level science course as part of the TRIO Student Support Services (SSS) program the summer before his first year on the Hill.

“I received SSS support during my entire time at St. Olaf. The impact that program had on me was huge, and I wouldn’t be where I am today without it,” Moriarity says. “I was the first person in my family to go to college, so I didn’t have any mentors in that respect. SSS took me under its wing and taught me how to be a college student.”

After graduating *cum laude* from St. Olaf with a B.A. in biology and chemistry and a concentration in biomolecular sciences, Moriarity went on to earn a Ph.D. in genetics and molecular, cellular, and developmental biology from the University of Minnesota Medical School in 2012. He was a post-doctoral fellow at the university from 2012 to 2014. In 2014, he established the Moriarity Lab.

Moriarity notes that the well-rounded education he received at St. Olaf resonates in his work today, and he credits the college for giving him his start in scientific research. He began as a research assistant in Professor of Chemistry Doug Beussman’s lab, and then was selected as an HHMI International Research Scholar. He spent the summer after his junior year in the Czech Republic, studying the way certain chemotherapy agents interacted with DNA and publishing a paper on his findings. He also participated in St. Olaf’s Biology in South India study abroad program.

“I was taught graduate-level science at St. Olaf, especially in my upper-level courses,” Moriarity says. “I was surprised during my first year in graduate school to be rehashing what I’d already learned. That allowed me to focus more on my research, and to propel it faster and further.”

“I’ve been interested in cancer research since I started in the sciences. Everyone knows someone — or is someone — who has had cancer, so that’s what drives me.”

St. Olaf also taught Moriarity how to prioritize projects and “juggle many balls at the same time” through effective time management skills, and the writing skills he developed in humanities courses like philosophy and religion continue to come in handy. “St. Olaf substantially improved my writing,” he says. “As any principal investigator knows, a big part of the job is writing grants, and so I use those skills every day in my work.”

Moriarity continues to stay engaged with St. Olaf. He has served on numerous SSS alumni panels and has hosted SSS students on visits to his lab at the University of Minnesota. He and his wife, forensic scientist Erin Hoffman Moriarity ’06, were the keynote speakers for the Piper Center’s Ole STEM event in 2019.

In addition to his demanding research and teaching schedule, Moriarity is flexing his entrepreneurial skills. He has started three genome engineering and cancer immunotherapy biotech companies out of the University of Minnesota, including Catamaran Bio, a Boston-based startup that manufactures genetic therapies to treat cancer based on research conducted at the university’s medical school. Catamaran Bio recently raised \$42 million in venture capital, a record amount for any company rooted in the university’s scientific research.

Moriarity also was the chief scientific officer of B-MoGen Biotechnologies, which was acquired by Twin-Cities-based Bio-Techne Corporation in 2019. He currently is a founder and chief innovation officer of Luminary Therapeutics, which is focused on nonviral autologous CAR-T cell therapies.

“These companies allow us to place critical focus on designing and engineering new therapies, and then getting them to the clinic safely,” Moriarity says. “They’re providing hope.”

One might argue that Moriarity himself is doing the same. 🦋





Branden Moriarity,
photographed in
Shoreview, Minnesota,
by Tom Roster



Apoorva Pasricha '14, photographed in San Francisco by Frédéric Neema/Polaris

Apoorva Pasricha '14 is solving problems at the intersection of the public, private, and social sectors.

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit and schools transitioned to online learning, the city of San José, California — like many cities around the nation — quickly realized the inequities around access and connectivity as it was faced with the challenge of getting digital devices into the hands of kids at home.

Luckily, the City of San José Mayor's Office of Technology and Innovation (MOTI) already had Apoorva Pasricha '14 on staff. As a Harvard Business School Leadership Fellow and the city's Deputy Director of Technology & Innovation, Pasricha operationalized San José's digital inclusion initiative, closing the digital divide for 4,000 households by allocating over \$1 million in grants to community groups serving low-income residents who lacked Internet access, digital devices, and digital literacy. Pasricha fundraised the money for those grants in a few short months, developed a framework for distributing the funds, and oversaw the launch of the initiative's online portal. Key to her work was engaging and collaborating with partners and multiple stakeholders across the public, private, and social sectors.

Says Pasricha, "I believe in the power of working together across sectors, as I don't think any one group has the resources or comprehensive expertise to develop solutions to our world's biggest problems." This approach makes her a tri-sector athlete, a term used to describe someone who can assess, understand, and engage the needs, aspirations, and incentives of people in all three sectors.

Pasricha's work on the digital inclusion initiative teed up her work in solving San José's remote school digital divide. She pivoted to building relationships that would result in providing students with reliable, quality laptops. Through the Digital Inclusion Fund, she established a unique partnership model for MOTI with Revivn (a certified public benefit hardware refurbisher), the Santa Clara County Office of Education, and the California Emerging Technology Fund. Pasricha used the partnership to create new revenue for the city, which ultimately reduced the number of students in San José without computing devices during the pandemic.

"We need to understand challenges from all perspectives, as well as understand what motivates each stakeholder," Pasricha says. "Some of the most powerful initiatives I've worked on have been collaborations between businesses, the government, and nonprofit organizations." While at MOTI, she launched an AI-powered chatbot to 1.2 million San José residents to help them access city services via either the Internet or text messaging, which was of utmost importance during COVID-19 shelter-at-home orders.

Pasricha currently is an operations and infrastructure manager at Zoox, an Amazon subsidiary that will soon bring robo-taxis to cities. "I'm a tech optimist and believe that technology can be a force for good," she says.

Pasricha credits St. Olaf with teaching her "to think through issues in a holistic manner," she says. She excelled at the college, graduating *summa cum laude* with a B.A. degree in economics and political science with a concentration in media studies. She spent a year studying development economics at the University of Oxford in the United Kingdom and participated in St. Olaf's Mayo Innovation Scholars program. She applied her classroom knowledge during internships at Twin Cities Public Television, the Alzheimer's Association in Chicago, and the Minnesota Department of Health.

After graduating from St. Olaf, Pasricha spent two years as an analyst at J.P. Morgan Asset Management, managing \$1.5 billion in investable assets, improving client onboarding processes, and initiating a recruiting effort that diversified the company's workforce. She then worked to digitize the state government of Massachusetts as an operations and strategy associate in the Executive Office of Technology Services and Security, also known as MassIT. Pasricha collaborated with the executive director to build the business case for the governor to centralize technology infrastructure in the state, better enabling the delivery of digital services. She also led the team responsible for reforming the state's technology talent hiring process, resulting in greater accountability, streamlined hiring practices, and taxpayer savings. Their work was codified into law.

"My biggest takeaway from J.P. Morgan and MassIT was understanding how data and numbers build narratives. In order for me to impact organizations at a systems level, I needed to know who the stakeholders were within the system, what their needs and motivations were, and how I could unite them over a shared vision," she says.

While earning an M.B.A. from Harvard Business School, Pasricha was a summer associate in strategy and business development with Sidewalk Labs & Intersection Co., a Google urban innovation company that is leveraging technology to make cities more sustainable and affordable. "Sidewalk got me thinking about how technology impacts a city from the perspective of its residents," Pasricha says, noting that her time there opened her eyes to the need to build technological solutions that engage everyone, not just wealthy communities. "A city's vulnerable communities can't be an afterthought," she says.

Pasricha's passion for entrepreneurship — building solutions that tackle problems from multiple perspectives and engage partners across different sectors — has informed each of the transitions throughout her career, she says, and it's what excites her most about her new role at Zoox.

"The way goods and services move about is an operational challenge that cities face," Pasricha says. "I'm inspired to be a part of providing affordable, lasting solutions to that challenge."

Her liberal arts background at St. Olaf also informs how she approaches problem solving. "When I'm asked to work on a problem that's ambiguous, my first instinct is to identify what principles we want to use to solve it," Pasricha says. "That stems from bringing people together around a shared vision, which I feel confident doing because St. Olaf enabled me to see equal value across different disciplines." 🦋

Mark Jansen '90 is leading the world's largest almond producing company.

Mark Jansen spent part of a 2010 family vacation in Mexico pondering what might be next for him, career-wise. At the time, he was president of global foodservice for the Schwan Food Company in Marshall, Minnesota.

“When you’re busy working, sometimes you need a break to pull your head above the clouds and think,” he says. He filled five pages of paper with detailed descriptions of an imagined, ideal next step — the type of company, his role in it, its culture and location, that sort of thing.

Like any good businessman on vacation, he called in to check his messages, listening to a headhunter asking him to interview for the chief executive officer position of Blue Diamond Growers, a California-based almond growing cooperative that is the world’s largest tree nut processing and marketing company.

The offer checked all of the boxes on Jansen’s list, so he and his family soon relocated to Sacramento, California, where he began his tenure as Blue Diamond’s president and CEO.

“This sounds really New Agey, but it was almost as though I called the job,” says Jansen, who is no stranger to the branded retail and food service business. “After years of working on pizza, pies, and ice cream, I was compelled to encourage people to consume a more healthful product.”

With its line of products including many varieties of snack almonds, Nut Thins gluten-free crackers, and almond milk, flour, and protein powder, Blue Diamond is an industry-leading \$1.6 billion global branded food manufacturer, cooperating with more than 3,000 small, multigenerational farm families and employing 1,800 workers in its processing facilities.

“As CEO, I have a servant-leadership mindset, to step in where help is needed, to figure out how to create additional opportunities, solve problems, and bring people together to work more effectively,” Jansen says. “So much of being a CEO is about communicating the vision of what we’re trying to accomplish.”

While he’s cognizant that sales and profitability are the key metrics of success at any business, Jansen notes that those aren’t the measure of his own achievements. “I like to think about the enduring changes we’ve made to ensure the vitality of the business,” he says. “Whether it’s the products we’ve launched or the farmers we’ve kept going or the diversity we’ve brought to our leadership, those are the things that matter and that will have a strong ripple effect.”

In April 2021, the *Sacramento Business Journal* named Jansen one of the region’s Most Admired CEOs. His executive commitments have included leadership roles

with the California Chamber of Commerce, including chairing its Executive Committee, International Forum, and Audit Committee. He is on the Board of Trustees for the International Nut and Dried Fruit Council, chairs the Graduate Institute of Cooperative Leadership, and serves on the Almond Board of California. Jansen also serves on the Advisory Council for the Presiding Bishop of ELCA, and is on the board of Gemini, a signage company based in Cannon Falls, Minnesota, that is owned by his college roommate Frederick Oss '90.

Prior to Blue Diamond, Jansen’s career included nearly 10 years at Schwan’s and marketing stints with Pillsbury, Edison Brothers Stores, and General Mills. He has led brand growth for Haagen-Dazs, Betty Crocker, Totino’s, Red Baron, Freschetta, and Wolfgang Puck, among others. He earned an economics degree at St. Olaf and an M.B.A. from Northwestern University’s Kellogg School of Business.

Jansen notes that his education at St. Olaf laid the foundation for his success in business, molding a nimble and fluid mindset that taught him to be comfortable with ambiguity. “My experiences at St. Olaf exposed me to different ways of thinking,” he says, which prepared him to work alongside people with diverse skill sets and life experiences, from farmers and food scientists to creatives, financial advisors, and operations and plant managers.

“I was drawn to St. Olaf because of the idea of studying abroad and because of the opportunity to study multiple subjects, from chemistry to economics to international relations,” says Jansen, adding that he was later surprised at how much he also enjoyed classes in religion and psychology. He spent a semester studying East-West business relations “during the early days of *perestroika*” through a DIS program in Copenhagen, Denmark. Jansen and his wife of 27 years, Carolyn, are proud that their children — Holly '17, Lindsey '21, and Noah (possibly '27) — are following in the St. Olaf tradition.

“The beauty of St. Olaf’s diversity of classes is that they create varied pathways for learning,” Jansen says. “Across the spectrum, I learned how to adapt and how to work well with other people, all while developing strong communication, writing, and analytical skills.” Jansen’s passion for marketing was noticed by Professor Kathy Gardner Chadwick, who stoked that interest.

Those skills were enough for Jansen to get his foot in the door at General Mills, where he landed his first job as a marketing analyst. “I had a basic understanding of computers and data analysis, so General Mills took a chance on me,” he says.

That first position set the trajectory for Jansen’s 30-year career in marketing and the retail food industry. “Over time, you discover what you enjoy doing, what gets you excited to go to work each day,” he says. “I’ve been fortunate through the vast majority of my work experience to be eager to get to the office. I don’t even mind being woken up in the middle of the night thinking about something, whether it’s a challenge or an opportunity. That’s what keeps me going.” 🍯



Mark Jansen '90, photographed at North Fork American River near Loomis, California by Frédéric Neema/Polaris



Novia Josiah-Isaac '12 is helping refugees recover from trauma.

Novia Josiah-Isaac is part of the large Karen community that has immigrated from Myanmar (Burma) to Minnesota after fleeing government-led religious and ethnic persecution. A 2012 graduate with a degree in social work, Josiah-Isaac is a social worker and mental health case manager for the Center for Victims of Torture (CVT), providing targeted case management services to Karen refugees in primary

care clinics through the center's Healing Hearts program. The program uses an interdisciplinary, team-based approach to providing integrated, specialized care for those who have lived through traumatic experiences, such as surviving torture or war atrocities.

"The Karen are an ethnic minority in Myanmar, which is still undergoing unrest," Josiah-Isaac says, referencing the military takeover of the country on February 1. "Myanmar has been in civil war for more than 70 years, and many Karen have had to flee to Thailand to escape violence and persecution." Many have found their way to Minnesota, which is home to the largest concentrated population of the Karen people in

Novia Josiah-Isaac,
photographed at
Central Park, Northfield,
by Tom Roster



the United States. By 2017, there were more than 17,000 Karen living in the state.

Josiah-Isaac's own family's experience as refugees informs her work at CVT. Her father arrived in the United States in 2000, and once he was granted asylum, the rest of his family joined him in 2004 from their temporary home in Thailand, including Josiah-Isaac, who was 15 years old at the time.

The Josiah family resettled in St. Paul, where Josiah-Isaac enrolled at Arlington High School. "English was not my first language, so I had trouble communicating and verbalizing what I needed," she says. "I also struggled with the cultural differences." She was encouraged to join TRIO's Upward Bound, and it was

"We have a legacy of helping, but we don't call it social work; it's just part of our culture."

through that program — which supports students as they prepare for college entrance, particularly underrepresented students or those from families in which neither parent holds a bachelor's degree — that she first discovered St. Olaf. She eventually encouraged her younger siblings, Darius Josiah '13 and Kaziah Josiah '17, to follow in her footsteps.

"My family had limited knowledge of what a liberal arts education was," she says. A St. Olaf course called *I Want to Help People* sparked Josiah-Isaac's connection to the Karen culture of helpfulness and gave her a name for her eventual career as a social worker. Courses in a variety of fields — from Asian studies to religion — honed her critical thinking skills, and fostered a sense of responsibility to others and an appreciation for their life experiences, she says.

"My community is a collectivist culture, rather than an individualistic one. We have a legacy of helping, but we don't call it social work; it's just part of our culture."

As a child, Josiah-Isaac was inspired by the "helpers" that surrounded her, included her parents. Her father, Saw Josiah, is a pastor at First Karen Baptist Church in Oakdale and worked as a resettlement manager for several years. Her late mother, Daisy Josiah, was well known in the community, managing the first in-home childcare center for children of Karen refugees in the Twin Cities.

During a junior year practicum at the Wilder Foundation, Josiah-Isaac worked with refugees struggling with mental health issues, further confirming that social work was the right field for her.

"Understanding the concept of Western mental health care is new for the Karen people," she says. "Many Karen have limited education because of being forced to flee and leave everything behind, and then living in camps for years without adequate health care or education. As a social worker, I support my clients as they navigate the medical system. I collaborate with doctors, pharmacists, and therapists — sometimes even attorneys — as we provide appropriate treatment as a team. I like to think of myself as the bridge between two worlds: the cultural way and the Western way."

Josiah-Isaac is the first Myanmar refugee in Minnesota to earn a master of social work degree (from St. Catherine University/University of St. Thomas in 2018) and become a licensed social worker. She is a bicultural Licensed Graduate Social Worker (LGSW) skilled in offering culturally responsive therapy in Karen and English to refugee adults. She also is fluent in Thai and conversational in Burmese. In 2020, she was recognized for her contributions to Minnesota's refugee community by the Minnesota Department of Human Services as a recipient of its Outstanding Refugee Award.

"I am so humbled to be able to bear witness to my clients' journeys of recovery," Josiah-Isaac says. "To witness their resiliency and to celebrate their small successes is very rewarding." 🏆

Elizabeth Decker Turner '06 is building resilient and equitable communities.

Elizabeth Decker Turner almost didn't consider St. Olaf. "I was in Northfield to visit Carleton, and my dad, who is a choral musician, said that I also had to check out St. Olaf," she says.

During her tour of St. Olaf, Turner noticed posters around campus that spoke to her interest in interdisciplinary connections — student events that featured topics like the intersections between religion and the arts and the connections between social justice and political engagement. She dug a little deeper and discovered that St. Olaf had an openness to exploring questions that traverse the boundaries of specific fields, setting it apart from other colleges that readily compartmentalize disciplines.

Although Turner planned to become an architect, she was looking for more out of her undergraduate experience than pursuing a structured architectural degree. "I wanted the liberal arts perspective," she says. "I was excited to explore faith and art through different lenses."

Turner had double majors in religion and interdisciplinary fine arts (a course of study that explored connections across art, dance, music, and theater). She also participated in St. Olaf's pre-architecture program and interned at SMSQ Architects in Northfield. She went on to earn both a master of architecture degree and a master of science in sustainable design degree from the University of Minnesota. She now brings a multidisciplinary perspective to her career as an architect, educator, and advocate for intentional communities. Turner also is a certified Passive House consultant, advising clients on building designs that minimize energy consumption.

"Architecture has always intrigued me because of its ability to shape our environments to be more beautiful, sustainable, and equitable," Turner says. "It's a way to shape community and concretize our values."

Turner is the founder and owner of Precipitate, a Minneapolis-based, women-led and women-owned firm that provides holistic architecture solutions to fit its clients' priorities and budgets.

"We are part of a radical shift in the industry, allowing women to bring their whole selves to work as complex human beings. We honor that at Precipitate, and we do better work because of it," Turner says.

The firm's projects reflect its commitment to creating living spaces that are resilient, energy efficient, and sustainable. "We take a transformative sustainable design approach from the beginning, with early phase energy informing a collaborative process toward carbon neutrality in buildings," Turner says.

Turner and her team recently partnered with Northfield's Community Action Center (CAC) in designing Hillcrest Village, a complex of affordable townhomes. "We conducted a study looking at three options: good (standard code-based)

construction, better (improved standard) construction, and Passive House construction," she says. "We provided energy modeling and discussed cost implications and buildability

for all three options." When construction begins on Hillcrest Village, Turner says, it "looks likely the CAC will choose to go with a cost-optimized version of the Passive House option."

Turner thinks it's no accident that her partners in the study are Oles — CAC director Scott Wopata '07 and Rolf Jacobson '01, a research fellow at the Center for Sustainable Building Research. "Designing a cost-effective, energy-efficient, and affordable home definitely requires the inquisitive nature you develop in the liberal arts, as opposed to maintaining business as usual," she says.

It's important to Turner that many of the projects she works on remain affordable. "Making sustainability and energy efficiency accessible to more people excites me," she says. "The energy burden — what we spend to heat and cool our homes — is higher for lower income populations. At Precipitate, we're really moving the needle and showing it's possible to reduce energy burden and still maintain affordability."

"Designing a cost-effective, energy-efficient, and affordable home definitely requires the inquisitive nature you develop in the liberal arts, as opposed to maintaining business as usual."

Turner shares her knowledge readily with others. During spring semester, she co-taught an environmental studies course at St. Olaf focused on academic learning and practical experience connected to community needs, with students researching sustainable building policy for the City of Northfield.

"Often cities or nonprofits don't have the time to delve into really big questions. Students have that resource of time, as well as the ability to listen deeply, and then do the needed research to support a community's efforts," Turner says.

Turner, who was recognized by Energy News Network as a 40 Under 40 clean energy leader and innovator, also recently testified before the Minnesota Legislature about updating the state's commercial energy code every three years to allow for buildings to be net zero in carbon emissions by 2036. She has mentored other women in starting architectural firms, is a member of the City of Minneapolis's Energy Vision Advisory Committee, and volunteers with the American Institute of Architects Minnesota to support workforce diversity.

"I'm interested in creating deep, transformative culture change in the architecture profession," she says. "It's hard and messy work, but it's critical to developing a community of practice that is inclusive and sustainable." 🦁

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



Elizabeth Decker
Turner, photographed
at the Art Barn on
the St. Olaf campus
by Tom Roster



Katie Barnes, photographed near their home in Hartford, Connecticut by Rick Friedman/Polaris

A KNACK FOR NURTURING COMMUNITY

Katie Barnes '13 explores the intersection of marginalized identities within the world of athletics as a writer for ESPN. It's work that feels personal, and it serves as a daily reminder that their privilege can be used to support others across the many identities they hold as someone who is queer, nonbinary, multiracial, and Midwestern to the core.

BY SARAH L. MOREAN

It's 5:00 a.m. in Hartford, Connecticut, and Katie Barnes is ready to write.

"I was known among my housemates to get up early when I was at Olaf to do my homework," Barnes says. "I loved taking 9:00 a.m. classes because I could get up at 5:00 a.m. and get in, like, three and a half solid hours of work before class. And I'm still like that."

Inside the charming storybook-style home Barnes recently purchased with their wife Elizabeth, an elementary school teacher, the cats and wife are snoozing and Barnes enjoys a diet Mtn Dew and a packet of club crackers. They open up Spotify and begin to play one song on repeat, all morning long, which sets the tone for whatever story they're tackling in their work as a writer for ESPN.

"I'm a routine-oriented person," Barnes says. "I think that's really important for me when it comes to creativity, and to kind of tell my brain, 'this is what we're doing — we're writing right now.' Especially when I'm on deadline."

Barnes never expected to become a writer. In 2015, they completed a master of science in student affairs in higher education at Miami University, with plans to support college-age LGBTQ students. Education felt like the right path, for a while. Especially since Barnes had been immersed in education for their whole life.

Barnes grew up in Culver, Indiana (population: 1,130), home of the private boarding school Culver Academies. They attended this elite institution, which also employed Barnes's parents: Cory Barnes, chair of the modern classical languages department and French instructor, and Mitch Barnes, humanities instructor and head coach of the speech team. It was here that Barnes's love of reading, discussion-based learning, and writing began. It's also where they first witnessed inequality and felt the tug of discomfort in the world as it was. Barnes has been out as queer since their time at Culver — a place where the young men wore military uniforms, and the young women wore plaid skirts, polos, and knee-high socks.

Though Barnes was confident in their sexuality, there were other aspects of their identity that felt difficult to express at that time. Feelings of not being entirely feminine or masculine. Of being both Black and white. Of being middle class in a town that was extremely poor but with classmates who were extremely rich.

“At that stage of my life, what really freaked me out about feminine clothing was having to make choices,” Barnes says. “I didn’t really have to dress myself, and I just kind of went with it. And so my first couple of years in college I found really challenging, because I didn’t have a style and shopping for clothes really just made me feel bad about myself.”

Today, they use gender neutral pronouns and maintain a coiffure of “gay hair” (as their mother calls it), which helps Barnes feel more honest and comfortable in their self-expression. And they use their life experience and comfort with duality to tell honest and compelling stories.

“I’ve never identified as a writer,” Barnes says. “I never had any ambition to publish a novel or to be a long-form journalist, you know, none of that.”

Yet Barnes has been actively writing all their life. For many years, their primary outlet was through fan fiction, and not just any old fan fiction. Specifically, Barnes wrote *Grey’s Anatomy* fanfic, shared on an official ABC message board.

Their obsession with the show as a teenager led them to this online community in the early aughts, which was extremely active at that time. Throughout the run of the television show, which began in 2005 and continues today, Barnes would publish stories with others on the board. Barnes especially enjoyed fantasies about their one true pairing (OTP), which is Callie and Arizona (“Calzona” in the *Grey’s* fanfic space).

The message board was a fun reason to create and also a social obsession that yielded lifelong friendships and a first love. Barnes continued to write throughout college and says that others in their St. Olaf honor house would even stage dramatic readings of their *Grey’s* fanfic.

Though writing was a compulsion, and something Barnes loved to do, it just wasn’t their lifelong aspiration to turn this knack for storytelling into anything bigger. The writing was personal to Barnes, a way to explore their queer identity and to build a bigger world for the TV characters they enjoyed.

It took a thoughtful mentor, former NFL player and Vice President of Inclusion Strategy for Product at Netflix Wade Davis, to urge them toward something more. The two met while attending the LGBT Sports Summit during Barnes’s last year of graduate school. The same year, Barnes had created their own internship at the Queer Resource Center at Portland State University and raised money to help two students attend Camp Pride, a summer camp for LGBTQ youth and college-age students that focused on impactful leadership-building skills, and that had made a huge impact on Barnes’s life.

Davis was impressed by Barnes and flew them out to New York to meet with other Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) organizers in the world of sports. It was there

that Barnes was introduced to the woman who would connect them with their first writing job as a sports and pop culture columnist for the blog *Feministing*.

From that experience, Barnes kept dogging opportunities that would enable them to keep a foot in the world of sports or writing. Maybe something at Nike. Or ESPN. Barnes was an avid sports fan, often the only person in the St. Olaf Queer Support and Outreach House (STOQSO) watching NFL games on Sunday. In addition, they were an experienced athlete who also coached youth basketball throughout college. The life they thought they were pursuing, to stay in education and work in LGBTQ student services, began to feel a little off-track. At best, a backup plan, if a career in sports and writing couldn’t be secured by pure mettle.



Katie Barnes spoke with St. Olaf history students in 2019 about life after graduation.

SARAH L. MOREAN

The summer after graduate school, Barnes embarked on a 50-state tour for a unique ad campaign that shared a message of equality through eating, which they also documented for *HuffPost*. It was then, at about state number 30, that some good news came. Barnes landed a role in the now-defunct ESPN digital media associate program. Following the program, they were able to permanently join the team and began to write compelling and heartfelt stories about the dizzyingly complex world of athletics — especially with an eye toward LGBTQ issues — that defined their career.

And the industry took note. In 2017, NLGJA: The Association of LGBTQ Journalists named Barnes Journalist of the Year. They also were awarded the inaugural Mosaic Award from the Deadline Club, a New York chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists, for excellence in elevating marginalized voices. And they are a two-time GLAAD Award nominee.

Like so many who thrive in the liberal arts, Barnes came to this success along an indirect path.

“I think a lot of people assume I don’t use my degrees — I use them all the time,” Barnes says. “I think about my American studies degree, which is probably the single most useful degree that I have. I wrote what I call my crowning achievement, which is this essay exploring the importance of *Bring It On* at 20 years, and I dense-facted *Bring It On* — which is exactly what we did in Am Con. It’s amazing. And I wouldn’t have written that in the same way had I not gone to St. Olaf.

“You know, I actually think what sets me apart is that I have [been exposed] to a whole bunch of ideas and writers and thinkers and history, and I have been trained to remember those things. I just synthesize them, and ask really important questions and try to seek the answers to those questions. To me, that’s just the fundamentals of the liberal arts. And I wish there was more engagement with the idea that a liberal arts education is fundamentally flexible rather than, somehow, it’s limiting or useless. It’s my passion.”

“There’s literally one publicly out, nonbinary person that’s a sportswriter in a national publication. And it’s me. Knowing that I am in a camp of one, it’s important for me to think about the privileges I have that have allowed me to be that person.”

Barnes attacks their work now as a writer for ESPN with a gentle understanding of athletes that is endlessly more than facts, stats, and game-winning predictions. Their work writhes with personality, displaying a whole figure with scars, conviction, and a whole lot of hope.

“I think my past has informed how I see the world,” Barnes says. “I think it really helped contribute to the empathy that I have in my job as a reporter. It gives me the ability to connect with people of all kinds of experiences and walks of life.”

As a writer, Barnes frequently confronts assumptions about identity, race, and sexuality. Friction that feels personal. And something they also addressed head-on while attending St. Olaf in 2012 as a response to Minnesota’s proposed amendment that would have prohibited same-sex marriage.

They worked at the forefront of this issue as a campus coordinator for St. Olaf Votes NO! and picked up efforts that were started by Brian Walpole ’13 to help organize the campus community, and college students throughout Minnesota, to block the restrictive marriage amendment.

“When I was a student, the LGBTQ student orgs and the sub-orgs were always politically active,” Barnes says. “The organization of LGBTQ students and also various allies around the proposed marriage amendment in fall 2012 was unlike anything I’ve ever seen at St. Olaf, certainly at the time, but I would argue probably even since then, in terms of what we were able to accomplish as a group.”

That year, Barnes was invited to speak at the Minnesota State Capitol as part of the large United for Our Future rally. In 2013, they received the Voice in Action National Leadership Award from Campus Pride, an organization that works to provide safe spaces for LGBTQ college students nationwide.

“What motivates me is that I’m a really community-oriented person,” Barnes says. “I feel a deep sense of responsibility to queer people, to queer people of color, to trans people, to non-binary people — because of the privilege that I hold. There’s literally one publicly out, nonbinary person that’s a sportswriter in a national publication. And it’s me. Knowing that I am in a camp of one, it’s important for me to think about the privileges I have that have allowed me to be that person, more so than the ways in which the intersection that I sit at from an identity perspective hinders my ability to advance in my job, have my work seen, whatever. And so I think very much about the communities that I represent and what it means.”

Barnes may have diverted from one meaningful career to another, and even left the Midwest for the Northeast, but they still return to St. Olaf as often as they can.

“There are many times when I go back to the campus, I don’t really tell anyone I’m coming, and I get a pizza bagel at the Pause, and I, you know, chill and catch a game,” Barnes says. “I get my favorite shake from the Pause and maybe get a sugar cookie from the Cage and just peace out. Nobody even knows that I’ve been there. Because those things are special to me and for me.”

In 2019, they did make contact with the campus community while passing through for the good snacks and sports. Barnes, who majored in history, American studies, and Russian area studies, spoke to a history class about life after graduation. Following the talk, a flustered nonbinary student thanked Barnes for coming back. It meant so much to see representation from someone who, like them, used they/them/theirs pronouns, attended St. Olaf, and who had gone on to achieve so much.

“When I say I want St. Olaf to change in certain ways, it’s not because I hate the institution as it exists,” Barnes says. “It’s because, for me, it was a challenging place to be at times as a person of color who’s queer, and I don’t necessarily want other students to experience that pain. I think we should be better and we should be thinking about these things. And if we profess to care about diversity and inclusion, then that should mean queer students in particular. I think I’m really highly critical about St. Olaf in that way, but I am very heartened to see the changes since I was a student. And I try and support those changes in any way that I can.”

At a time when it feels like many of our institutions are failing us, Barnes self-identifies as a “hopeless institutionalist,” adding “if I as a person profess to love a place, how can I then walk away from it and not try and make it better?” 🍷

SARAH L. MOREAN is assistant director of digital communications at St. Olaf College.



KYLE OBERMANN '14 SUPPORTS CRITICAL CONSERVATION EFFORTS
IN CHINA BY USING HIS PHOTOGRAPHY TO TELL STORIES ABOUT
CHINA'S ENDANGERED SPECIES AND NATURAL HABITATS.

FOLLOWING



THE DREAM

BY KIARA JONES '21

The spectacular Halong glacier, located on Amnye Machen, one of the four holy mountains of Tibet.



Kyle Obermann's photography has been published by *National Geographic*, the Nature Conservancy, and the BBC.

“When I was at St. Olaf, if you would’ve asked me at that time what my dream job was, I would’ve said *National Geographic* photographer or environmental photographer,” says Kyle Obermann ’14. “I never thought that five years down the road that’s what I would be doing — but here I am.”

Obermann is the author and photographer of a stunning spread published recently in *National Geographic*. In his piece, he writes about China’s inaugural national park plan and the difficulty of balancing conservation with the tourism industry.

“The experts all agree that though there are some bright spots in China’s new park system, it’s too early to predict how the parks will affect conservation and local livelihoods long-term,” he points out in the article.

Obermann majored in political science at St. Olaf, with concentrations in environmental studies and Chinese. His interest in photography started in high school as a hobby. “I picked up my mom’s camera after I finished my homework and went outside in our backyard,” he says. “I started taking photos of random stuff, and I remember my goal back then was to make my semi-boring backyard look cool or look like the Amazon.”

Today he’s a full-time conservation photographer and influencer, connecting “mainstream Chinese society and large corporations with environmental issues.” His writing and photography has appeared in more than just *National Geographic*: Obermann has also been published by the BBC, the Nature Conservancy, and more. He is also a member of the popular Chinese television talk show *Informal Talks*, where he discusses individual carbon footprints and China’s many mountains.

He travels often and only spends about seven days a month at home in Chengdu, China. There is no “typical day” in the world of conservation photography. He’ll be in a national park or a nature reserve or in the wild. He may live in a ranger station or focus on documenting the work of field scientists. He also gives talks at various institutions in Asia, such as the Chinese Ministry of Environment, Kyoto University, TEDx, or the U.S. Consulate in Chengdu. When he’s home, you’ll find him editing footage, running ultramarathons, or going to hip-hop dance classes. Every day is different and full of surprises.

“The main goal of my work is to support the conservation of critical habitats and endangered species in China’s wilderness areas,” he says. “Bringing awareness to these issues through images can help tell an effective story.” And with greater awareness, everyone benefits.

Obermann says he’s never taken a photography class, but opportunities at St. Olaf gave him a strong foundation for his current work. As a student photographer in the college’s Marketing and Communications and Admissions Offices, as well as the Athletic Department, he was assigned a variety of tasks that helped him hone his photography skills. “In a way, [it was] photojournalism of campus life.”

Having the chance to learn from his mistakes as a student photographer and improve under “forgiving staff” at St. Olaf gave Obermann room to grow technically and creatively. While working as a sports photographer in athletics, he once broke an expensive camera while wrongly attaching it to a tripod at a soccer game, and he says his first portraits of professors for the website “were pretty dismal.” But he enjoyed telling stories with his camera, shooting different athletic competitions and events while also enjoying his own athletic experiences as a member of the men’s track and field and cross country teams.



Obermann gained valuable photojournalism experience at St. Olaf while working as a student photographer.

In addition to his love for photography, St. Olaf also sparked a passion for the Chinese language, which Obermann fell in love with after just one class. “I remember coming out of that first class and all we had learned was how to say ‘hello,’ which is *ni-hao*, and I was saying it to myself, smiling. I probably looked like a fool, but it made me happy because it was so cool and different and it spoke to me.”

Early support from his language professor as well as his roommate, Duy Ha ’14, an international student from Vietnam, gave him confidence. Later, his professor’s ability to make learning the language enjoyable encouraged Obermann to continue taking Chinese.

“Professor Pin Pin Wan made class so fun, and for the first time I felt like a professor actually believed in me and was confident in me,” he explains.



The Shennongjia Forestry District, in western Hubei, Central China, is known for its rich biodiversity and for the rare and endangered golden monkey.



A local conservationist marks the retreat of glaciers on the Tibetan Plateau in northwest China's Qinghai Province.

His foundational experiences continued when he competed in the inaugural Ole Cup, held by the Piper Center for Vocation and Career, and pitched the idea of doing adventure photography in China to a panel of Ole alumni. “I wasn’t successful in getting funding,” he says, “but the push by the Piper Center to develop that pitch, and eye-opening experiences like the Quo Vadis retreat, helped me believe and visualize my goal for the first time.”

As a senior, Obermann spent six weeks in Beijing and also traveled to other parts of China. After that experience, his career path was clear to him. “I went from talking about my dream job to doing it,” he says. After a summer of anxious waiting and doing door-to-door fundraising for an environmental group in Texas, he finally received a full scholarship to do a year of language studies at one of the country’s best universities and then began working as a photographer while remaining in China, taking photos of ultramarathon races and The North Face athletes competing in China and Europe.

“It’s pretty amazing how St. Olaf put China in my life,” says Obermann, who also marvels at how his undergraduate interests in Chinese language, political science, and environmental studies have converged in his professional life. “At one point in time, U.S.-Chinese relations were such a big issue. Chinese environmentalism and carbon emissions were massive issues for the world. Suddenly, all of these concentrations and majors — which I did not plan to fit together — fit together perfectly.”

This discovery helped him reflect on the one important thing he learned at St. Olaf: “I learned the value of using opportunity with such a flexible education to pursue what truly spoke to me.”

He’s happy that he gets to do what he does every day, and he encourages other Oles to follow their passions.

“The benefits of my interdisciplinary education at St. Olaf may not have been clear immediately, but to this day they are still paying off big time! If you’re true to yourself and follow your passion, and it’s something that really lights a fire in you, then you will succeed. Be true to those passions no matter the cost.” 🙌

KIARA JONES graduated from St. Olaf in May with a B.A. in American Studies.



Faculty Retirees

By Suzy Frisch

This year we say farewell to 22 professors who have devoted decades to teaching, research, advising, and leadership within their departments and the broader college. They leave a deep and lasting legacy to the St. Olaf community with their scholarship, advocacy, collegiality, and humor, enriching the lives of countless students with their expertise in economics, religion, theater, history, English, French and German, Asian Studies, music education, music (voice), jazz, nursing, philosophy, Kierkegaard, mathematics, computer science, statistics, and physics. Together, these esteemed colleagues have served the college for an astonishing 727 years. They have challenged their students academically, supported their hopes, passions, and identities, and prepared them for lives that are meaningful and productive. We thank them for all they've done and wish them well in their retirement.

Karen Achberger

Professor of German

Karen Achberger joined the St. Olaf German faculty in 1979 and taught all levels of German language in addition to classes in world cinema, women in fairy tales, German cinema, literature, art, and sustainability. She led the *Theater in East and West Berlin Interim* in 1981, before the fall of the Berlin wall, and the *Arts in Vienna Interim* six times between 2000 and 2014. Throughout her 41 years at St. Olaf, Achberger wanted her students to acquire not only language skills and an understanding of German history, art, and culture but also the ability to collaborate in small, diverse groups.

"St. Olaf students continually inspire me, and I want to give them a chance to inspire each other too. They are the most outstanding thing about St. Olaf. They want to do well and to make the world a better place. I find them very thoughtful and highly motivated, and it's just a privilege to be around them," says Achberger, whose latest book acknowledges two *summa cum laude* graduates, Nancy Simpson-Younger '06 and Amber Griffioen '02, for their meticulous and tireless research assistance contributing to *The Critical Writings of Ingeborg Bachmann* (2021), which Achberger co-edited and co-translated with Karl Ivan Solibakke.

Achberger was a strong and early proponent of St. Olaf's Foreign Languages Across the Curriculum (FLAC) initiative, where professors integrate language study into classes taught in English. She also was an early participant in St. Olaf's oral communication (ORC) program, where she designed courses that help students develop their oral foreign language skills in different contexts.

Achberger also served on the Executive Councils of Women in German, of which she is a "founding mother," and the German Studies Association, of which she is a charter member. She is the author of *Literatur als Libretto*, *Understanding Ingeborg Bachmann*, *The Critical Writings of Ingeborg Bachmann*, and over 25 articles in journals and anthologies. In support of her scholarly and classroom work, Achberger received grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities, American Council of Learned Societies, German American Exchange Service, and Fulbright, plus numerous faculty development grants from St. Olaf.

During retirement, Achberger aims to share her love of German language and culture with others. That could include teaching adult and Elder Collegium courses in Northfield and abroad. She also plans to continue her scholarship on the Austrian writer Ingeborg Bachmann and playwright-poet Bertolt Brecht. Above all, she wants to be a devoted "Oma" to her granddaughters, Addison, Hannah, and Evelyn, future Oles (!) of parents Emily Love Achberger '06 and Tilman Achberger '04.

Richard Allen

Professor of Mathematics, Statistics, and Computer Science

Richard Allen is a founding father of computer science at St. Olaf. Hired in 1975 to help launch the concentration, he has been a steady presence and a major influence as the program grew and evolved into a very popular major.

After joining the St. Olaf faculty, Richard was tasked with co-teaching the college's first computer science course with physics professor Duane Olson. Together they started the curriculum with a course on computer hardware and assembly language programming. On the software side of the curriculum, Richard placed emphasis on high-level programming languages and their applications, a theme that remains today. Throughout his tenure, Richard played a big part in designing courses and project-focused coursework.

Richard also helped St. Olaf establish itself as a computing pioneer, insisting that the college adopt the UNIX operating system to support academic coursework. Ole graduates became known as skilled UNIX programmers, thanks to student work experience and research opportunities on the Hill.

During several sabbaticals, Richard worked in French labs developing applications of declarative programming languages to create intelligent systems for improving geometry instruction. He continued this work at St. Olaf with mathematics colleagues Martha Wallace '75 and Judy Cederberg, where they received National Science Foundation grants to integrate the use of geometry software into pedagogy for secondary school geometry teachers. Richard's research and other work in declarative programming eventually got incorporated into St. Olaf's computer science curriculum.

Throughout his many years at St. Olaf, Richard truly enjoyed teaching excellent students and working with top-notch faculty in his department. "I had an extraordinary run with colleagues who made this place intellectually challenging and a place that makes sure students do well in areas that are often not easy," he says.

Richard and his wife, Professor Emerita of French Wendy Allen, made a habit of showing students the world. They served as field supervisors for Term in the Middle East, arriving in Turkey just before 9/11, led Global Semester twice, and taught Interims in Morocco multiple times. There, Richard taught the geometry of Islamic patterns — another of his areas of expertise.

"St. Olaf and the department in general have allowed me to do things I never could have done at a Research-1 institution, so I'm very grateful," says Rich. "It allowed me to live the liberal arts life."

Linda Berger '73

Professor of Music/Music Education

There was only one job that would entice Linda Berger away from teaching elementary classroom music: becoming a St. Olaf professor. When the lead music education position opened in 1997, Berger applied and soon made the transition from teacher of children to teacher of future teachers.

"My experiences on the St. Olaf campus — especially in the St. Olaf ensembles — shaped my musicianship and modeled community, influencing everything that I am today," says Berger, who earned a doctorate in music at the University of Minnesota. "It's the most natural thing in the world to share the things that bring you joy, meaning, and connection to those around you." Berger became a professor to widen her impact on students by helping to shape excellent teachers of music.

Before joining the St. Olaf music faculty in 1997, she taught for 24 years in public schools and earned accolades in 1990 as a Minnesota Music Educator of the Year and in 2021 as a member of the Minnesota Music Educators Association Hall of Fame. Her favorite stories, though, are about the positive impact music has had on former students.

At St. Olaf, Berger taught courses in methods supporting active music-making in elementary and secondary classrooms, led practical courses in keyboard skills, and helped to supervise music student teachers. Berger also assisted the music department in reshaping the music education curriculum a few years ago — focusing on a more culturally responsive and relevant curriculum — a process that continues today under her successor, Dr. Leigh Ann Garner.

Berger was particularly committed to helping future teachers learn to mold curriculum and classroom experiences that would connect with and reflect a school's cultural community. Thanks to Berger and her professional Education Department colleagues, Ole future teachers gain experience in varied settings — including local practicums, experiences with a wide variety of ages, and a January term assisting in an urban school music setting. Many also choose to student teach in at least one very diverse school setting.

Berger found it rewarding to build relationships with students during their time on campus and continued to support students as they sought their first jobs and stepped into the world as educators. She notes with pride that there are Ole music teachers across the country and around the world who make a difference for others through music every day. She plans to do the same, continuing her lifelong service as a church musician, spending time with children and grandchildren, and volunteering in the community.

Brian Bjorklund

Professor of Theater

A fascination with how things work and a love of theater, design, and architecture made design and technical theater production a natural fit for Brian Bjorklund. During 40 years at St. Olaf, he shared his expertise and passion, playing a major role in educating students and shaping the Theater Department.

When Bjorklund first arrived on campus to teach in 1981, he evolved the department's design and technical coursework and broadened student involvement in its production areas. He worked with other theater faculty to develop a meaningful sequence of courses, creating robust offerings that integrate all aspects of theater.



Achberger



Berger



Bjorklund



Allen

"I thought it was valuable to have students learn things across the discipline — history, playwriting, acting, directing, design, production, and management," Bjorklund says. "Getting students into those experiences and coursework prepared them to do design work on any of the five productions each year."

Bjorklund taught a full menu of courses, from producing theater to theater architecture. A long-time, active member of the United States Institute for Theater Technology, Bjorklund made many connections that allowed him to open doors for students at venues like the Children's Theatre Company and the Guthrie Theater.

Bjorklund was involved in myriad areas of St. Olaf, including working on information technology committees and as department chair for more than a decade. He secured grants to create a video with students called *The Making of Performance* for high school theater educators, helped run the St. Olaf Children's Theater Institute summer camp, and teamed with Northfield area schools on productions.

It made for a rewarding career for Bjorklund, encompassing design and production work for more than 100 productions. "When it all works and becomes a wonderful story and everything fits together, that is the most satisfying thing," says Bjorklund. "It is so great to teach and work at an institution that strongly values the arts and the place they have in culture, learning, and expression."

David Booth

Associate Professor of Religion

David Booth came to St. Olaf in 1985 to teach in the Religion Department and the Paracollege. At the time, he was a bit of an outsider — neither a Midwesterner nor a Lutheran. But from the start, he found a home in the college. He loved its twin commitments to the liberal arts and to the rigorous academic study of religion. He loved the commitment to interdisciplinary collaborations. He loved how the college places student questions at the center of teaching and learning.

In the Religion Department, he found brilliant friends and mentors, who helped him continually expand his range of interests. Though he taught a range of religion courses, he was drawn to material about groups harmed by dominant traditions. He was best known for courses on feminist theology; religion, gender, and sexuality; and ecological theology. In his last years of teaching, he also developed courses on theology and race.

In the Paracollege, Booth found an exhilarating community devoted to interdisciplinary, student-centered scholarship and teaching. Through collaborations with Paracollege colleagues, he settled into a practice of teaching that placed students' questions at the center of classroom improvisations. Indeed, Paracollege experiences shaped his approach to teaching throughout his career. "My greatest pleasure as a professor," says Booth, "has been to read powerful works with students, and then place those works in dialogue with the questions and issues that animate the class."

Following the closure of the Paracollege, he was the first director of the St. Olaf Center for Integrative Studies (CIS). In that role, he developed structures for individualized majors, including reflective web portfolios, linked courses, team-taught courses, and pilots for several emerging concentrations.

The Paracollege and the CIS also provided him the opportunity to experience the benefits of team teaching. Throughout his career, he was blessed to collaborate in the classroom with colleagues from many departments. Booth describes himself as having been a "glutton" for such adventures: "I learned so much from the example of my colleagues — both from their subject expertise and from their manner as teachers."

Besides such *ad hoc* collaborations, Booth was an enthusiastic participant in St. Olaf's Conversations programs, including The Great Conversation, the Science Conversation, and Environmental Conversations, which he led for several years. In retirement, Booth will teach in the St. Olaf Alumni and Family Travel program, beginning with a course on religion's role in America's ongoing racial reckoning.

Mary Cisar

Professor of Romance Languages/French

Working for 43 years at one college gives a person plenty of time to make a difference. Since joining the faculty in 1978, French Professor Mary Cisar took full advantage of her tenure at St. Olaf, teaching numerous courses, serving as registrar, leading the Department of Romance Languages, and showing students the world.

When teaching French, Cisar aimed to bring an interdisciplinary focus by weaving in history, literature, art, music, and culture. She led students on Interim trips to Paris and taught in the Paracollege, the Great Conversation, and the Women's and Gender Studies program.

"That's one thing I have really enjoyed about being at a liberal arts college — you get the opportunity to teach many things, and that's been important to me," Cisar says. "I wouldn't have been able to teach such a broad range of courses at a large university."

Odds are, Cisar probably wouldn't have been able to move into administration and then back into teaching either. Cisar served as the college registrar from 2002 to 2015, as assistant vice president for academic affairs, and as Academic Support Center director. She helped steer major efforts, including switching to the online registration system and the renovation of Thomson Hall.

Cisar appreciated being able to support St. Olaf's academic programs and work closely with a larger cross-section of faculty, staff, and students than she normally encountered in the French Department. "I got to understand better

what was going on with students on campus," she says.

For the final chapter of her career, Cisar returned to the classroom. She sought the opportunity to teach and engage in research again, exploring the French Enlightenment, French-Canadian literature, and French horticulture.

A lifelong learner, Cisar intends to dive further into gardening, learn Norwegian, and explore her family history. She will look back fondly on her time at St. Olaf. "It's been a great experience and a wonderful career," says Cisar.

Jean DeLaney

Professor of History and Latin American Studies

As a historian and expert in Latin America, Jeane DeLaney brought insight and understanding of the region to students inside and outside the classroom. She approached Latin American studies from a historical lens to help students gain deeper knowledge of Central and South America.

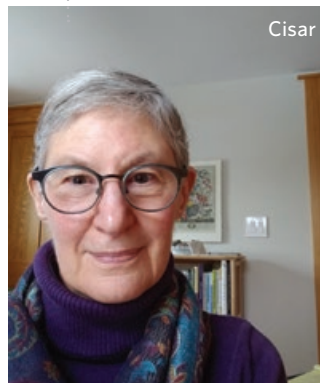
Initially planning on a career in international development, DeLaney was an exchange student and then a Fulbright Scholar in Colombia — life-changing experiences. She was excited to join a college that highly values global studies. DeLaney trailblazed a path for Oles to travel and learn in Cuba during Interim, a program she led eight times.

"Studying abroad was transformative for me, and I wanted to share that with my students," DeLaney says. "St. Olaf has such a commitment to study abroad. They value it, they support it, and they supported me."

Joining the St. Olaf faculty in 1990, DeLaney taught numerous courses on the Hill, such as the First-Year Seminar on conquest and colonization, the environmental history of Latin America, and modern Latin America. She developed a public history class that explores memory and history, including how museums, monuments, and governments shape views of the past.

She also was active in committee work, serving on the Faculty Governance and Curriculum Committees, among others. DeLaney directed the Latin American Studies program and Foreign Languages Across the Curriculum (FLAC), a role she particularly enjoyed. She was involved with FLAC from its beginning, appreciating the opportunity to deepen students' understanding of a subject and language acquisition.

DeLaney is proud of her tenure at St. Olaf, including contributing to both the History Department and Latin American Studies program. She has been an active scholar, writing about immigration, race, ethnicity, and nationalism and recently publishing *Defending the True Nation: Identity and Nationalism in Modern Argentina*.



DeLaney currently lives in Portland, Oregon, where she is active in StoveTeam International, a nonprofit organization that brings low-emission cookstoves to Central Americans.

David Hagedorn

Artist in Residence/Jazz

Under the tutelage of David Hagedorn, the St. Olaf jazz program has been transformed into a nationally esteemed entity that attracts students from across the country. When he became the college's Artist in Residence in Music, Hagedorn brought a wealth of experience from teaching at other universities and playing with renowned orchestras and bands.

Hagedorn earned his doctorate at the Eastman School of Music while teaching at University of Wisconsin-Superior and playing gigs all over the place. When he joined St. Olaf in 1997, Hagedorn taught percussion, jazz, music theory, and world music. About a decade ago he added jazz improvisation and jazz history classes.

Hagedorn grew the jazz program in size, stature, and repertoire, adding a range of musical styles and difficulty. Thanks to his connections in music circles, Hagedorn got wind of the music being performed by professional big bands and brought it to St. Olaf. He also left his mark on the college's percussion program, helping it improve and grow.

"When I started, most of the people in the top jazz band [Jazz I] were from the Twin Cities. Now we're drawing people from all over the place, and they are here to play in the jazz band. They have a deep understanding of the music to start with, so we're able to do music that's being played by programs that have jazz degrees," he says. "We can perform to their level."

Hagedorn has many highlights from his St. Olaf career, including leading the Jazz I trip to Cuba in 2016 and recent accolades. In 2011, *DownBeat* magazine — known as a foremost authority on jazz — selected St. Olaf Jazz I as its Best Large Undergraduate Jazz Ensemble. The band again earned *DownBeat* honors in 2019 for Outstanding Performance by Large Undergraduate Jazz

Ensemble. Hagedorn likens the award to the music equivalent of winning the NCAA basketball tournament, and later nabbing second place.

Though Hagedorn will miss teaching and rehearsing with students, he is looking forward to concentrating on performing. He plans to play as much jazz and classical music as he can, "as long as my hands work."

Joan Hepburn

Associate Professor of English

Joan Hepburn joined the English Department faculty in 1987, offering students a different dimension of literature in English than many of them had ever encountered. With a B.A. from New York University and a Ph.D. in African Drama from Brown University, her interests in drama and ritual have taken her around the world. During her tenure, Hepburn has sought out not only West African drama written in English, but also plays by Caribbean and American writers whose work shows a direct African influence. During a recent leave of absence for a Joyce grant, Hepburn was able to observe the same festival dramas in one village after another in Yoruba country in Nigeria, experiencing the rituals upon which so much of contemporary African writing draws.

While she loves the challenge of research and cultural exchange, she also loves teaching, communicating to students that there are other ways of being, and encouraging her mainstream and multicultural studies classes to celebrate diverse cultures.

"Joan Hepburn's contributions to the English Department, Race and Ethnic Studies, Africa and the African Diaspora, and St. Olaf College have been immense," says Jon Naito, associate professor of English and chair of the English Department. "She has mentored, taught, and supported many, many students, faculty, and staff over the years, in visible and less visible ways, and her work in shaping the lives of BIPOC members of our community has been especially crucial. Though Joan will be moving on, she leaves a legacy; and the St. Olaf community will continue to benefit from her contributions for many years to come."

Paul Humke

Professor of Mathematics, Statistics, and Computer Science

Paul Humke has harbored a lifelong commitment to exposing students to the beauty and satisfaction of mathematics. So much so that when he negotiated his first contract at St. Olaf prior to joining the faculty in 1980, he made sure that it set aside a percentage of his salary for undergraduate research. Having taught at other colleges for a decade, Humke knew that "such things are often looked at as an extravagance. It's easy to take away," he says. "But I could see what undergraduate research did for students. It's an invaluable experience and a motivation. Students really see what our life as research mathematicians is all about."

Humke hired students to serve as assistant editors on the *Real Analysis Exchange*, a research journal based at St. Olaf, and worked with students on individual projects. With others, he helped teach a course in undergraduate mathematics research that led to many students getting papers published in academic journals.

A specialist in real analysis, Humke enjoyed being able to teach all of the St. Olaf mathematics courses. He found something special about Oles and their passion for the subject at hand. "I have loved the teaching we have at St. Olaf, and our students. That for me is really a career highlight," Humke says. "So is being part of a dynamic and nationally recognized program that really knows what it's doing."

Humke also has been a fixture at the Budapest Semesters in Mathematics for nearly as long as his tenure on the Hill. The study abroad program currently attracts about 200 North American advanced mathematics students, giving undergraduates the opportunity to learn from prominent Hungarian mathematicians. He served as program director for about 20 years, still serves on the board, and works to expand its student body and programs.

Humke plans to continue his mathematics research during retirement, along with spending more time with his grandchildren and playing tennis.



Hagedorn



Humke



Hepburn

Amy Kolan

Professor of Physics

Amy Kolan finds fulfillment in sharing her love of physics, mathematics, and computer science with those aiming to enter these fields. Yet she also finds deep satisfaction in getting others excited about science and helping first-year students successfully transition from high school to college.

Kolan came to St. Olaf in 1982 in pursuit of a career at a liberal arts college, unfamiliar with Midwestern Lutheran schools. She was thrilled to find an engaged faculty and students who were, and still are, committed to exploration. She taught at the intersection of physics and mathematics, bringing expertise in mechanics, statistical mechanics, algorithm design, and astrophysics to the classroom and student research.

"I'm proud of the many students I trained, the superstars who had as many as five classes with me. But I think I'm prouder of the average students who I was able to turn on to physics," Kolan says.

She helped build close ties between the St. Olaf Physics Department and its counterpart at the University of Chicago (UChicago). Kolan spent a sabbatical in the late '80s at UChicago doing research and helping develop a new course with Leo Kadanoff, an esteemed theoretical physicist. The class explored chaos and computing using computational physics, a subject Kolan was already teaching at St. Olaf.

Kolan's significant time at UChicago opened doors for many Oles to do summer research and pursue graduate studies there. Other career highlights include teaching varied courses, such as partial differential equations and astronomy, where she opened many eyes to the wonders of science. Kolan also incorporated significant computation into her classes and developed computing research projects for all levels of students.

In recent years, Kolan tackled the challenge of guiding as many as 20 students simultaneously through individual research. "I saw how powerful it was to incorporate small research projects at the end of a course," she says. "I get great joy in having every physics student get a taste of doing research."

Judy Kutulas

Professor of History and O.C. and Patricia Boldt
Distinguished Teaching Professor in the Humanities

Judy Kutulas's curiosity about a wide swath of the humanities could not be contained. Fortunately, St. Olaf gave her the autonomy to teach, explore, and create courses for like-minded students. During her tenure on the Hill, Kutulas developed interdisciplinary programs and classes that guided students to think analytically about the world.

Kutulas brought together history, pop culture, women's studies, and more in a variety of formats, including the Paracollege and American Conversations. She helped start the college's Media and Film Studies and Women and Gender Studies programs, chaired the History Department, advised the Race and Ethnic Studies program, and served as program director for American Studies and Women and Gender Studies. Her scholarship has been just as diverse, including books about the organizational history of the ACLU, radical intellectuals in the mid-20th century United States, and 1970s popular culture.

Kutulas came to Northfield in 1986 as an adjunct before landing a tenure-track position at St. Olaf. She found the college refreshing, having studied at large public universities, where faculty are more specialized and focused on research. "What I thought teaching history would be like and what I've been able to do here are two totally different things," she says. "I've gotten to put my fingers in pies I didn't even know existed."

Kutulas particularly liked teaching American history through film and having "so many students who found what I was doing interesting," she says. "I enjoyed working with many faculty members who are engaged in bringing students positive, important experiences, people who think about teaching, who pay attention to what students are interested in and what they might need, and not just lecturing and working on their research."

As the Boldt Distinguished Teaching Professor in the Humanities, Kutulas endeavored to revitalize humanities teaching and learning at St. Olaf. In retirement, she will create more pottery and continue serving on the Northfield Arts Guild Board.

Kolan



Gordon Marino

Professor of Philosophy and Curator of the Hong Kierkegaard Library

Gordon Marino has enjoyed an eclectic career at St. Olaf. It includes working as a philosophy professor and curator of the Hong Kierkegaard Library, starting and coaching the college's boxing club, and helping coach the Ole football team. Connecting much of this work is Marino's motivation to help students of the ring, the gridiron, and philosophy live lives of integrity no matter what life throws their way.

In 1995, Marino was hired to be curator of the Hong Kierkegaard Library and a member of the St. Olaf philosophy faculty. The Kierkegaard Library already was a gem, but Marino opened the collection to a wider audience. By expanding its collection and programming to all manner of scholars, the library became lauded as one of the finest Kierkegaard collections in the world.

"It's highly unusual to have an enterprise like ours at an undergraduate institution," says Marino. "But the administration and the college have nurtured the library, and in the process, help us make it meaningful and useful to St. Olaf students. I am very thankful for that." Although he retired from teaching in 2020, he will continue as curator until St. Olaf hires his successor.

Marino is a prolific writer who covers boxing, philosophy, and often the two combined for the *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, and others. He has published 10 books, including *The Existentialist's Survival Guide* in 2018. In addition to his work with aspiring Ole pugilists, the veteran boxing trainer continues to coach local amateurs and professionals. As you will glean from his extensive and award-winning writings on the "sweet science," Marino sees fruitful connections between teaching and coaching, with each pursuit helping improve the other.

He found it gratifying to teach St. Olaf students, appreciating their earnestness and kindness while they delved into the philosophy of law, ethics and sports, existentialism, Kierkegaard, and more.

Marino was the Boldt Distinguished Chair in the Humanities (2003-06) and winner of the Gertrude Hillboe Award for faculty involvement in student life in 2006. In all of his classes, Marino aimed to teach the subject matter, of course. "But I also try to nudge my students into getting beyond their understandable vocational worries and concerns and focus on the question of what kind of person they want to be," Marino says.

Kutulas



Marino



Jim McKeel

Professor of Music, Voice, and Lyric Theater

When Jim McKeel arrived at St. Olaf in 1986, he had already amassed a decade's worth of opera performances across the country. He continued working with the Minnesota Opera and other companies for another decade, giving him a wealth of experience for the classroom and St. Olaf's Lyric Theater.

McKeel found a nurturing environment at St. Olaf, full of camaraderie among students, faculty, and staff. He thrived thanks to its approach to academic and artistic freedom, which allowed McKeel to create courses and performances that helped students hone their craft.

"I could teach the way I wanted to teach," he says, noting that such freedom opened doors for him to co-create a Lyric Theater production every semester with supporting courses. McKeel particularly enjoyed developing an improvisational opera course, for which students eventually staged a one-hour production based entirely on audience contributions. McKeel also co-created a recurring Interim course that allowed Oles to guide a Northfield elementary school in developing and performing its own opera.

In the classroom, McKeel aimed to foster a positive, encouraging environment that supported students' passion for music and theater. "My best learning and times on stage have been with people who see possibilities instead of 20 reasons why something might not work," he says. "The best teaching is done through a mutual passion and with young people who can build on their strengths while seeing their potential for growth."

McKeel served as director of the Academic Support Center, where he appreciated gaining broader perspectives on the needs of students and faculty advisors. He also prized his many teaching, performing, and composing collaborations with the Theater Department.

A prolific composer, McKeel has written more than 60 operas, operettas, musicals, choral works, and songs, including five operas that he premiered for Ole students. With more time on his hands, McKeel plans to revise and repackage some of his operas and promote a children's book he wrote with his daughter.

Diana Odland Neal '83

Associate Professor of Nursing

As a professor of nursing, Diana Odland Neal strives to impart the same credo she learned as a nursing student at St. Olaf: Be present with your patients and treat them like family. She carried these lessons into her work in pediatrics and the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU), where she worked as a staff nurse, transport nurse, and neonatal nurse educator, as well as during her 25 years on the Hill.

"The most important thing is to do the very best job you can possibly do for patients," she says. "I also focus a lot on self-care, [telling students] that you need to take care of yourself first in order to help take care of others."

As an undergraduate at St. Olaf, Neal planned on a pre-med degree. But the enthusiasm of a friend who was pursuing a nursing career helped Neal realize that was exactly what she wanted to do. After receiving her bachelor of science in nursing, Neal worked in a variety of settings, including providing health care in Kenya. She received her master of science in maternal-child health nursing and education at the University of Arizona-Tucson in 1988, before returning to Minneapolis to work as the assistant nursing education coordinator at Children's Hospital. In 1996, Neal joined the St. Olaf nursing faculty full time.

Neal directed the Minnesota Intercollegiate Nursing Consortium and is a member of the Minnesota Consortium for Nursing Education Research. The focus of her research is on developmental care for preterm infants in NICU and educational strategies related to teaching undergraduate nursing students. Widely published in her areas of research, Neal has served on faculty governance and IT committees at St. Olaf, chaired the Nursing Department, and taught courses in pediatrics, nutrition, images of wellness in the media, and hands-on nursing care, which she still provides at Children's Hospital Infant Intensive Care Center. Neal continues to be most passionate about caring for children, providing health care in rural villages in Kenya and Tanzania, and educating nursing students. She credits her former nursing professor, friend and colleague Mary B. Johnson '60, with teaching her about self-care and holistic care of patients. "She has been instrumental in



Odell

my journey as a nurse and nurse educator," says Neal.

Neal has enjoyed her time at St. Olaf immensely, with a goal to shape students into being excellent holistic nurses. "It has been the joy of my career. I just love the students," Neal says. "Working with them, sharing my passion for caring for others, and being present with them during their greatest time of need was the most important thing that I was able to do."

Margaret Odell

Professor of Religion

Maggie Odell has relished the opportunity to teach one of the world's greatest pieces of literature — the Bible — during 26 years at St. Olaf. Though both students and approaches to biblical studies have changed, one thing that has remained constant is Odell's passion for sharing her love of and fascination with the Old Testament.

Odell joined the college's Religion Department in 1994, just as St. Olaf adopted a general education requirement that students take a first-year Bible course. That class became a staple of her teaching, in addition to courses in Hebrew, the biblical God, and the Hebrew prophets. Over the years as Oles arrived with less Biblical knowledge, Odell shifted her teaching style to reach a more general audience.

"It's been fun to figure out ways to take what I consider works of the world's greatest literature and make it relevant to all students," Odell says. "The St. Olaf setting has allowed me to grow and change in my approach to teaching along with changes in the student body."

Odell, who developed expertise in the prophet Ezekiel, is grateful that St. Olaf supported her research and scholarship, including writing a major commentary on Ezekiel and sabbatical travel to a 12th-century church in Germany to view a cycle of paintings of his visions. It's work Odell will continue in retirement as she writes a new book on the prophetic literature.

Odell enjoyed teaching in the Great Conversation program and serving two terms on the tenure and promotion committee, giving her an appreciation of all that St. Olaf faculty accomplish. Above all, she cherishes memories of interactions with students in the classroom.

"My main goal is to encourage them to think for themselves, to respond to the Bible as literature and be able to appreciate its peculiarity," says Odell. "One student just told me recently that she liked the fact that she could think critically and analytically about the Bible in my class. Because she could think for herself, she also could hear other people's perspectives. And I think that sums it up for me."



McKeel



Neal

Mark Pernecky

Associate Professor of Economics

While growing up in Illinois, Mark Pernecky was quite familiar with St. Olaf. His father, a professor and associate dean at Northwestern University, used to happily recruit Oles for its graduate music programs, and his mother was a Lutheran church organist. When Pernecky finished his doctorate in economics at the University of Notre Dame, he sought a faculty position at a church-related liberal arts college, and found St. Olaf to be a wonderful fit.

After joining the St. Olaf Economics Department in 1990, Pernecky taught a number of classes, including *Macroeconomic Theory*, *Principles of Economics*, and *Labor Economics and Employee Relations*. He strived to help students understand abstract economic theories by grounding his coursework in current events. He often did that by setting up debates about policy issues such as the 2017 tax cuts or the Green New Deal.

One of the courses Pernecky created focused on economic justice, which became part of the ethical issues and normative (EIN) perspectives general education requirement. Pernecky helped develop the workshop to train faculty to teach EIN-related courses, calling on his experience at Notre Dame, where he studied the relation between Christian ethics, philosophy, and economics.

Pernecky enjoyed teaching in St. Olaf's robust Economics Department. He appreciated how "smart and nice" the students at St. Olaf are — a combination that's not found at every college. He also appreciated St. Olaf's emphasis on faculty research and encouragement to engage in both pursuits.

"This was a great balance of teaching first, with an emphasis on doing research that contributes to your teaching and helps you stay up on your field. It gives energy to your teaching if you put a few drops of water in the pool of knowledge you are teaching from," says Pernecky, who recently published a paper with Associate Professor Emeritus of Economics Paul Wojick in the *Cambridge Journal of Economics*.

He took advantage of St. Olaf's many opportunities to collaborate, including teaching in the Paracollege, writing a chapter for *Claiming our Calling* (a book that included chapters by 13 other St. Olaf faculty members), and twice serving on the Curriculum Committee. A jazz pianist, Pernecky made connections with other musicians on the Hill, often playing gigs with talented faculty, and with the Twin Cities Jazz Festival. It's something he plans to do more of in retirement, along with writing a book on economics and ethics.

Dolores Peters

Associate Professor of History

The most meaningful aspects of Dolores Peters's 34 years on the faculty have been her work integrating teaching and scholarship to develop the curriculum and the many opportunities she had to watch St. Olaf's liberal arts education transform students. "Increasingly, I've come to value teaching as an investment in the future," Peters says. "It's a huge privilege to be part of that investment and experience in other people's lives."

As a modern European historian specializing in modern French history, Peters has offered a range of courses covering the 18th through the 21st centuries. She used her research in the social and cultural history of medicine to bring context to historical developments, highlighting what happens when the individual body and the body politic collide. This area of interest allowed Peters to bring together history majors and pre-meds in a seminar exploring how 18th-century medical ideas shaped enduring views of race and gender and in a survey of medical vocation in historical context (as a Lilly Fellow). Supervising a CURI project with French Professor Jolene Barjasteh, Peters worked with students to examine medical views of illness and suffering that permeated 19th-century French literature.

From the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris to the BBC Written Archives in London, Peters has researched the French medical profession from 1920 through the 1940s. Her work draws attention to the leadership of Catholic doctors in modernizing a militantly secular medical profession and has contributed to scholars' understanding of how opportunism across the liberal professions provided initial support for the Vichy regime in WW II and then for Liberated France.

Peters's campus leadership in two national initiatives in higher education provided additional opportunities to enhance innovative and interdisciplinary teaching, learning, and inquiry. A member of the first cohort of the Center for Innovation in the Liberal Arts (CILA) Associates program, she became an advocate for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL), a hybrid field that recognizes teaching as intellectual work and focuses on enhancing

student-centered approaches to learning. Her presentations at national and international conferences helped assure a presence for liberal arts voices in this field.

As director of Digital Humanities on the Hill (DH), Peters helped introduce opportunities for faculty to enhance digital skills and develop DH projects for individual courses, programs, and research while collaborating with other experts from Instructional Technology and the Libraries at

St. Olaf. Peters's work lives on in St. Olaf's Digital Scholarship Center. "One of the things I'm proudest of is that we developed a model that is truly collaborative, [one] that brought faculty, staff, and students into informal cohorts," says Peters. "It was a powerful experience to see an initiative develop inside the college and know that we have some partners and relationships on campus that will last far into the future."

Anant Rambachan

Professor of Religion, Philosophy, and Asian Studies

Anant Rambachan didn't know what to expect from a college rooted in the Lutheran church when he came to St. Olaf in 1985 as a new professor of religion from Trinidad and Tobago, by way of graduate school in England. He discovered a department that included experts in the major world religions and a college with deep curricular commitments to the study of faiths.

"I appreciated that religion was not just studied from a social science perspective but from normative perspectives in the interest of understanding what religions mean for people who live in those traditions," Rambachan says. "I have been able to bring students my perspective as a scholar-practitioner of Hinduism."

Rambachan also shared his commitment to and passion for interreligious dialogue. St. Olaf provided a fertile atmosphere for him to engage in teaching, scholarship, and outreach, developing significant coursework in dialogue and comparative theology. As Minnesota and the country grew more religiously diverse, Rambachan appreciated being able to delve into a variety of subjects with students, such as legal issues related to religion and how different religions respond to each other.

"I wanted students to understand clearly what the world looks like through a Hindu lens and look at it in relation to their own commitments," Rambachan says. "I also wanted to help them understand the necessity and value of dialogue and relationships among people of the world's religious traditions. If we are open to receiving the wisdom that religious traditions have to offer, we understand others and ourselves much better."

To that end, Rambachan worked with colleagues to develop team-taught classes, where professors combine their expertise to teach and study different religions. He also works nationally and internationally on interfaith relations through the World Council of Churches and the Vatican. Currently, Rambachan serves as chair of the Minnesota Multifaith Network and co-president of Religions for Peace, the world's largest interfaith organization.

"It's important for students living in today's world to be religiously literate — not only in their own traditions but in other traditions in the United States. This is the most religiously diverse country in the world," Rambachan says. "We cannot afford to be ignorant about each other. With ignorance comes fear and stereotyping, and ignorance can lead to violence. I'm happy that St. Olaf



Pernecky



Peters



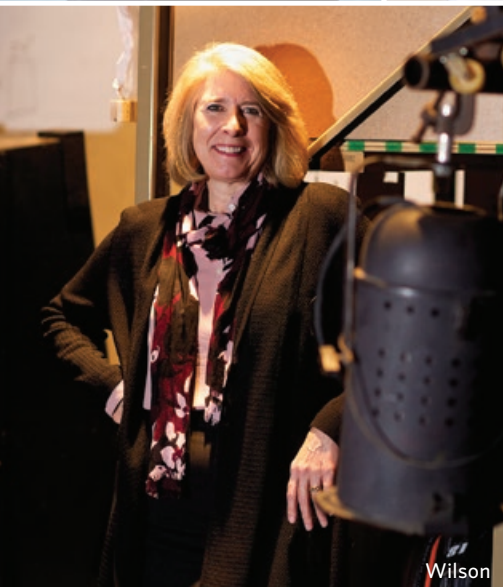
Rambachan



Reed



Taliaferro



Wilson

Charles Taliaferro

Professor of Philosophy and the Oscar and Gertrude Boe Overby Distinguished Professor of Philosophy

Joining the St. Olaf faculty in 1985, Charles Taliaferro aimed to build long-lasting bonds with students while fostering their love of wisdom and encouraging them to ponder the questions of life. It has been a fruitful place for Taliaferro, allowing him to teach and support students while engaging in rigorous scholarship.

Taliaferro enjoys opening opportunities to students, such as working alongside him as research or editorial assistants. He has also co-authored pieces with them and helped them get published on their own. "The most rewarding thing I've found at St. Olaf is building close relationships with students that often last beyond graduation," he says. "It has been deeply rewarding to contribute to their quality of education and life beyond St. Olaf."

The feeling has been mutual, as students picked Taliaferro to deliver the Last Lecture 10 times. He wrote and taught widely, including courses in theology and aesthetics, racial justice, and environmental ethics. Many of his 36 books, plus a multitude of chapters and papers, have been translated into numerous languages. In 2021 alone, Taliaferro will publish seven books, including a four-volume *Encyclopedia of the Philosophy of Religion* he co-edited and *Is God Invisible?*, which he co-authored with former St. Olaf professor Jil Evans.

"I try to do cutting-edge material in all of my classes so that I'm welcoming students into publishable areas — areas where people are right now wrestling with ideas," Taliaferro says. "I want to bring them up to speed on the field of philosophy and the discourse."

For Taliaferro, an "event of a lifetime" was traveling to Tehran with Tom Churchill '14 to present at a conference about Iranian philosophers. It was a culmination of the connections Taliaferro built over the years with Iranian students and philosophers.

Taliaferro plans to continue teaching in retirement, but in Minnesota prisons. Motivated by his Christian faith, he seeks to contribute to the education and rehabilitation of prisoners while learning about prison reform.

Karen Peterson Wilson '77

Professor of Theater and the Patrick J. Quade Endowed Chair of Theater

Karen Peterson Wilson has been a pillar of the St. Olaf Theater Department, making contributions in the classroom, on the stage, and in the community for more than 40 years. She opened the world of theater to all, creating a rich legacy through the courses she taught, plays she directed, and programs she created.

Since joining the theater faculty in 1979, Wilson taught just about every theater course in the college catalog and developed many more. In the more than dozen courses she created, Wilson exposed students to a variety of subjects, from theater and the church to contemporary world theater. She is finishing her last semester teaching one of her favorites, *Who Owns the Arts: Sponsorship, Sponsorship, and Artistic Freedom*.

Along with teaching, Wilson directed nearly 40 plays and expanded the opportunities offered to Oles in theater. She is especially proud of developing St. Olaf's New Plays on Campus project with the Minnesota Playwrights' Center. Students perform a new play and interact with active writers, while the playwrights see their work come to life. The format has been adopted across the country and internationally. Wilson also helped create the Anna K. Bonde Memorial Apprenticeship in Theater, where recent graduates spend a year at St. Olaf gaining work experience on its productions.

In addition, Wilson opened students' eyes to the larger world of theater. She developed the study abroad program, Arts and Literature in Australia and New Zealand, and led the Theater in London program six times. Wilson has been active in statewide theater organizations, including serving as president of the Communication and Theater Association of Minnesota, and the Perpich Center for Arts Education.

Above all, Wilson enjoyed her tenure at St. Olaf because of the students and their overall zest for learning. "The quality of the students here is magnificent — the biggest joy I have every day is in the classroom," says Wilson. "They want to be here, they want to learn, and they bring a lot to the class and their work. It's a great place to teach and it's because of the students, no question." 🐣

SUZU FRISCH is a freelance writer and regular contributor to *St. Olaf Magazine*.

continues to be a place that offers opportunities for students to learn about other religious traditions."

During two terms as chair of the religion department, Rambachan hired the college's first professor of Judaism and its first African American theologian. He also wrote scores of essays and book chapters and will soon publish his sixth book, *Pathways to Hindu-Christian Dialogue*.

In retirement, Rambachan will serve as an advisor to the St. Olaf Lutheran Center for Faith, Values, and Community.

Barbara Reed

Professor of Religion and Asian Studies

Barbara Reed's religiously diverse family piqued her interest in exploring different faiths. She would often discuss reincarnation and karma with her father, opening her eyes to East Asian religious beliefs. Ultimately, Reed decided to devote her career to exploring and engaging students in Eastern religions.

"Whether I'm teaching Buddhism or the religions of China or an introduction to Asian studies, I'm interested in getting students to see the world from a different viewpoint and try on the perspective of another group of people," Reed says.

She has deep ties to Asia, having spent a year in Taiwan studying the Chinese classics. She also was a Fulbright Teaching-Research Fellow in Taipei, where she researched Buddhist higher education and taught comparative scriptures to Buddhist monks and nuns.

Joining the St. Olaf faculty in 1982, Reed has taught Chinese and Japanese religions as well as Asian Conversations courses. There, students learn Chinese or Japanese along with interdisciplinary studies in history, culture, and society.

One of Reed's favorite parts of her job was guiding Oles to Asia for Interim classes. "It's always such a learning experience for me to see students engage with Chinese and Japanese culture for the first time," she says. "You can see it through their fresh eyes."

Reed is proud of helping transform the Asian Studies program into a full-fledged department, making it possible to expand St. Olaf's offerings. She also engaged in scholarship, including writing the book *Culture and Customs of Taiwan* with her husband, Gary Davison.

As scholars of Asia, the couple traveled deeply on that continent. Reed looks forward to exploring Europe and other areas, as well as getting more involved in the Northfield community. "I'm really looking forward to this next stage in my life," says Reed. "But I will miss my colleagues, and I'm definitely going to miss getting to know the new generations of students."

Oles support health care workers during the pandemic through new nonprofit

By Anna Barnard '21

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, health care providers and hospital staff have been working diligently to treat patients with the virus and keep their communities safe. While busy on the frontlines, some of them need extra support at home in caring for children, running errands, and more.

Through the nonprofit MN COVIDSitters, created by a group of University of Minnesota medical students, St. Olaf College students have stepped up to provide free childcare and tutoring, adult respite care, errand running and pet sitting to health care workers in the Twin Cities metro area. Officially certified as a 501(c)3 nonprofit, MN COVIDSitters has inspired and supported the creation of 30 sister organizations throughout the United State and international chapters from the United Kingdom to the Middle East.

In Minnesota alone, COVIDSitters has had over 280 volunteers provide free services to more than 250 families since the beginning of the pandemic. Students who are interested in volunteering can see the home zip codes of families that have signed up online and pick a location that best fits their availability. As a token of appreciation, MN COVIDSitters fundraises in order to provide gift cards to volunteers in gratitude for their work.

Along with providing direct volunteer services, St. Olaf students have supported the work of MN COVIDSitters in several other roles. While the organization was initially almost entirely comprised of medical students from the University of Minnesota, St. Olaf students and alumni now sit on the board of directors and administrative teams.

Hannah Phipps '20, a member of the board, first learned about the organization from a St. Olaf Facebook page early in the pandemic. Although she had already returned home to

Colorado, she joined MN COVIDSitters as part of the volunteer recruitment team. A year later, she now serves as the admin liaison between the board of directors and administrative teams.

"It has been amazing to see how many passionate and thoughtful people came together to address a very critical issue in health care infrastructure. It is particularly rewarding to work to meet community needs through immediate direct service while advocating for long-term, sustainable change. It has been a privilege to be a part of such a dynamic and impactful team," Phipps says.

St. Olaf nursing major Emily Crosby Lehmann '22 serves on the administrative board by leading the public relations and outreach team for MN COVIDSitters. She also serves on the volunteer recruitment team and has provided childcare for a single mother in St. Paul who works 12-hour shifts as a pediatric critical care nurse and is studying to be a nurse practitioner.

"It is a lot of work between school and volunteering, but the work is so fulfilling and I know that we really make a difference in our Minnesota community," says Crosby Lehmann, who is committed to MN COVIDSitters and believes that it has had an incredibly positive impact on Minnesota health care providers. Recognition by national news outlets, such as the Minneapolis *Star Tribune* and *The New York Times*, indicate that others think so too.

"I think COVIDSitters has really saved some families. When we think of health care workers, we often think of doctors. They have definitely been affected by the pandemic, but what we don't see as often in the media are the nurses, the nursing aids, respiratory therapists, hospital cleaning crew, cafeteria workers, lab techs [and



TOM ROSTER

Emily Crosby Lehmann '22

more], who have also been on the frontlines. There are a lot of health care families who have struggled financially throughout the pandemic. COVIDSitters has provided a consistent and free service for those who have been caring for our families throughout the pandemic," Crosby Lehmann says. "It has been so uplifting to be able to provide help and make someone's life easier in a time that is so hard for all of us."

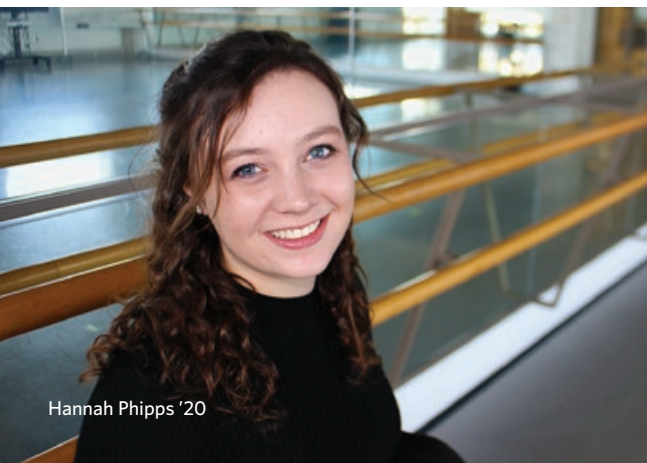
While the pandemic hopefully will subside in the near future, MN COVIDSitters is here to stay. The organization's team members are working with a group of consultants through the University of Minnesota Carlson School of Business to develop plans for the long-term future. One of the organization's goals is to expand service coverage to those outside of the health care field. In order to do that, they will continue fundraising efforts to provide gift cards to volunteers and to hire an executive director by the end of summer 2021.

"There are numerous ways for people to get involved now and in the future

as we leverage our capacity to serve the Twin Cities post-pandemic. Our volunteer babysitting program is ongoing, and we are excited to be launching a summer tutoring program," Phipps says. 🐾

If you would like to learn more, or are interested in volunteering, visit mncovidsitters.org.

ANNA BARNARD graduated from St. Olaf in May with a B.A. in English and religion.



NICOLE SANFORD '20

Hannah Phipps '20

St. Olaf Theater: A Centennial Celebration, 1921-2021

"Drama is not a matter of showing off or exhilaration, but it is a process of sharing joys and sorrows with others."

— ELIZABETH WALSHINGHAM KELSEY

A new book, thoughtfully organized by **Karen Peterson Wilson '77**, the Patrick J. Quade Endowed Chair of Theater, celebrates 100 years of theater at St. Olaf College. Represented in decades, beginning with the genesis of St. Olaf Theater in 1880, the selections celebrate the range of productions and honor generations of artists who have contributed to St. Olaf Theater.



A Midsummer Night's Dream, 1924

"This project is built on the shoulders of all those who have worked hard to preserve the history and valued the creative work of theater artists. The result is a tremendous treasure," says Peterson Wilson. "May the work, creativity, and artistic expression that is theater exist forever."

When St. Olaf unveiled its first-ever all-college dramatic presentation in April 1921, few people could have envisioned how the following century would unfold for the fledgling theater program. St. Olaf Theater is recognized today as one of the most respected in the collegiate arts, with milestones ranging from premieres to unique set designs to acclaimed acting and directing.

In *St. Olaf Theater: A Centennial Celebration, 1921-2021*, writer Jeffrey M. Sauve, former longtime college archivist, weaves together entertaining

and fascinating stories. These include the groundbreaking radio broadcast of Shakespeare's *As You Like It* in 1922; the spell-binding chronicles of the supposed ghost of Kelsey Theater; the unwavering dedication of faculty pioneers like Elizabeth Walsingham Kelsey, Ralph H. Haugen, and Patrick Quade '65; and illuminating conversations with alumni. From cover to cover, the book is replete with engaging photographs that provide a snapshot of the theater's 100-year history.



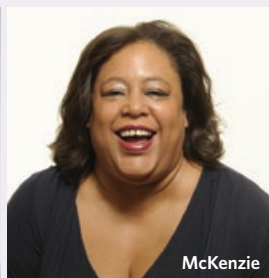
St. Olaf Theater: A Centennial Celebration, 1921-2021 can be purchased online at byallmeansgraphics.com/books.



Godspell, 1974



DeRose



McKenzie



Morgenson



Palmer

The State of American Journalism

What do Ole journalists think of 2020? Between the COVID-19 pandemic, the election and resulting insurrection, the call for racial justice, and natural disasters like no other — how did journalists navigate the changing tides, what effect did 2020 have on journalism, and what does their profession look like going forward?

Earlier this spring, the Office of Alumni and Parent Relations hosted an event for students and alumni that covered these questions and more. The panel, sponsored by Ole Connect and moderated by Associate Director for Alumni Professional Networks and Affinity Groups **Beth Anne Thompson '88**, featured four accomplished Ole journalists: **Jason DeRose '97**, western bureau chief for National Public Radio (NPR) News based in Culver City, Calif.; **Cat McKenzie '92**, executive producer of *GMA3: What You Need to Know* and *ABC News Live*, where she is the lead for special projects and breaking news; Pulitzer Prize-winning *New York Times* journalist **Gretchen Morgenson '76**, currently the senior financial reporter in the Investigative Unit at NBC News; and Politico veteran **Anna Palmer '04**, CEO and co-founder of *Punchbowl News*.

Oles can view the event at stolaf.edu/multimedia.

Oles, submit your class news online!

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 or call 507-786-3028 or 888-865-6537.

1950s

Phil Froiland '50 is, at 92 years young, very excited that his grandson **Reid Mathers '25** has committed to attend St. Olaf this fall! ❶ The proud alum and his future Ole, Classes of 1950 and 2025, are celebrating this great news during the time of COVID!

■ **Roald Tweet '55**, a much beloved English professor at Augustana College, Rock Island, has passed away. ❷ In addition to his teaching, Roald was a Quad City cultural icon and longtime radio personality whose love and use of the English language inspired generations of residents and students. Among his many talents, Roald enjoyed whittling and wood carving, and built model airplanes, grandfather clocks, and even a clavichord.

1960s

NEW BOOKS BY 1960s OLES

Lutheran Mzungu: My Encounter with Cultural Difference Teaching in Tanzania (PRWeb, September 2020), by **Dorothy Radius Kasik '69**

The 2021 Society of Christian Ethics Lifetime Achievement Award was recently presented to **Larry Rasmussen '61**, the Reinhold Niebuhr Professor Emeritus of Social Ethics at Union Theological Seminary. ❸ Through his books, essays, and leadership of the 10-year collaborative project Earth-

Honoring Faith, he argued influentially for an ecological ethic that considers the well being of all creation. Larry is a member of the Science, Ethics, and Religion Advisory Committee of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and former co-chair of the Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation Commission for the World Council of Churches. He has also served on numerous boards and advisory committees, authored numerous papers and books, and lectured throughout the world on a variety of topics. He is a member of the International Bonhoeffer Society, the Society of Christian Ethics, and the American Academy of Religion. ■ **Jon D. Rondstvedt '61** passed away on Nov. 18, 2020, due to complications from COVID-19. ❹ A retired English teacher, Jon co-founded the Headwaters for Lifelong Learning Center in Park Rapids, Minn., and taught classes for the Cannon Valley Elder Collegium in Northfield. With his love of learning and St. Olaf history, Jon set about finding B.J. Muus's idealized "firmly footed" St. Olaf lions in the architectural designs of various campus buildings. In a Spring 2011 *St. Olaf Magazine* story, Jon revealed where Oles could locate these hidden-in-plain-sight "lions with attitude." ■ Nine members of the St. Olaf Nursing Class of 1964 gathered (pre-pandemic) in Washington, D.C., to attend the 25th anniversary of the U.S. Army Women's Memorial. Pictured, L-R (front row): **Gail Pierce Daly, Sandra Gordon Ghormley, Marilee Thompson Tollefson, Diane Cameron Reba, Ann Benson Rudolph**; (back row) **Lois Qualley Hallberg, Ruth Anderson Falchetta, Beverly Nefstead Nelson, LeeAnn Lokensgard Meyers**. ❺ Of this group, Gail, Marilee, Diane, Ruth, and Ann served as Army Nurses. Sandra served as a Navy Nurse. LeeAnn, Beverly, and Lois also attended the celebration and reunion." ■ **Paul Knutson '67** was recently featured in *History of Wetland Science: A*

Perspective from Wetland Leaders, a retrospective book about scientists who have made an impact in the field of wetland science. Paul is a past president of the Society of Wetland Scientists and former editor of the *Journal of Wetland Science: Wetlands*. He has published more than 20 scientific papers in the field of wetland science and is recognized for his work on wave dissipation in coastal marshes.

1970s

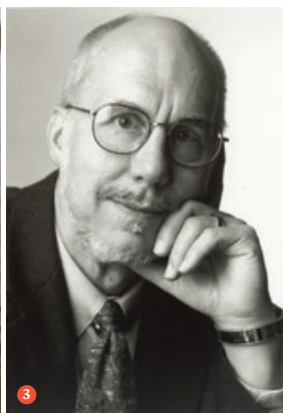
NEW BOOKS BY 1970s OLES

Devotional Thoughts on the Lord's Supper, the Offering, and Prayer (self published, 2020), by **Ronald Johnson '71**

Railman's Son (Finishing Line Press, 2021), by **LeRoy Sorenson '73**

Quitting Time (Atmosphere Press, 2021), by **Patrick Cabello Hansel '75**.

Role models for young girls are important, especially in fields that are considered nontraditional. Few know this better than New York City firefighter and artist **Brenda Berkman '73**, whose life and career at the FDNY has inspired a children's book titled *Send a Girl! The True Story of How Women Joined the FDNY*. ❻ "The book provides both women's history and also inspiration and encouragement at a time when every age group really needs — maybe even craves — these things," Brenda says. "The lessons of *Send a Girl!* go far beyond my life or even women in firefighting. I hope children can learn from the book that courage has no gender and bravery comes in many forms." ■ **Patrick Cabello Hansel '75** writes, "After 35 years of serving inner-city parishes in the Bronx, Philadelphia, and Minneapolis, I retired on June 30, 2020. I continue to be active with justice, arts, and literary organizations in Minneapolis."



1980s

NEW BOOKS BY 1980s OLES

Taking Kierkegaard Personally: First Person Responses (Mercer Kierkegaard, 2020), edited by **Jamie Lorentzen '81** and Gordon Marino, St. Olaf Professor of Philosophy. Chapter contributors include **Peder Jothan '94**.

Deep into the Dark (Minotaur Books, 2021), by **Traci Lambrecht '89**, aka **PJ Tracy**

HUMAN | nature (self-published, 2020), by **Tim Werner '85**

A Most Peculiar Book: The Inherent Strangeness of the Bible (Oxford University Press, 2021), by **Kristin Swenson '88**

Author **David LaRochelle '83** and illustrator Mike Wohnoutka are the 2021 recipients of the Theodor Seuss Geisel Award for *See the Cat: Three Stories About a Dog* published by Candlewick Press. David, a former elementary school teacher, is the author and illustrator of numerous picture books, including *The Best Pet of All*, a Children's Book Sense Top Ten selection and one of *Child* magazine's Best Books of 2004. ■ **Amy Becker '85** writes, "I retired in May 2020 after almost 30 years in federal law enforcement. Ended my tenure in sunny San Diego. Happy that the only shoveling I do is the dirt in the garden, not snow. Outside of the pandemic, retirement feels like a never-ending weekend. Looking forward to more global travels post pandemic." ■



Remembering Charles Solem '50

Charles "Chuck" Solem, recognized in 1986 by St. Olaf College with a Distinguished Alumni Award, passed away on March 4, 2021. He was 95.

Charles joined the U.S. Navy in 1944 and served as a Communications (Signals) Officer on the USS *Bergen*, a troop transport deployed in the South Pacific during World War II. After the war, he attended St. Olaf, later enrolling in both Georgetown and George Washington Law Schools while working for National Airlines in Washington, D.C.

In 1954, Charles founded International Building Services (IBS) and P&R Enterprises in 1969. While building his businesses,

Charles began attending Luther Place Memorial Church and quickly became involved in a variety of church activities, from singing in the choir and taking on church council leadership roles to participating in the Young Adult Fellowship, where he met his future wife, Marcia Johnson. In the 1960s, as the Luther Place neighborhood began to change, Charles saw a need to be of deeper service to his community. A preacher's son, his commitment to supporting pastors in translating biblical mandates such as "welcoming the stranger" into living, breathing ministries was unshakeable. He accompanied pastors to meetings with leaders in the interfaith and business communities, as well as in government, building strong relationships that were critical in supporting the church's mission of opening its doors to the hungry and the homeless, to those needing shelter and assistance, to Central American refugees seeking asylum, to organizations working on social justice issues that needed meeting and work space. His leadership abilities and humor cooled the temperature in the room when discussions got heated as to how best to live out that mission. Charles worked with church and community leaders on the founding and development of N Street Village and its mission. Today, N Street Village serves nearly 2,000 homeless and low-income women each year.

Charles loved Luther Place and enjoyed sharing stories about people and events from the church's history. He was also generous philanthropically, both personally and through his businesses. He supported many charities and educational institutions, including funding three scholarships at St. Olaf College, and he received numerous awards, among them the Founders Award from N Street Village. Charles treasured his friendships and family, and he will be missed by everyone whose life he touched over the years. Charles is survived by Marcia, his wife of 68 years, with whom he had three children, Thomas, Christian, and Suzanne '80, who passed away in 2012 after a long battle with cancer; along with five grandchildren.

Erik Ensrud '86 ① was promoted to professor of orthopedics/rehabilitation and professor of neurology at Oregon Health and Science University in Portland and was recently named to the international medical advisory boards for both the Myositis Association and the Hereditary Neuropathy Foundation. ■ **Wendy Porter '89** is co-chair of 50/50 Women on Boards™, a leading global education and advocacy organization driving the movement toward 50/50 gender balance and diversity on corporate boards. Ole women in cities around the world can learn more at 5050wob.com.

1990s

Todd Gienapp '92, a pulmonary and critical care physician at the Vancouver Clinic in Vancouver, Wash., has been leading the ICU's COVID response to the various COVID-19 surges. His colleagues and friends applaud his dedication and service, recognizing how principled he is under pressure, how compassionate he remains under stress, and how capably he leads with humanity. ■ **Jean Fossum Bonneville '96** writes, "Five Oles and their families competed in Smithsonian's Virtual Winter Solstice Trivia Competition and were declared the winners! The team included **Rebecca Anderson '96**, husband Rick, sons Alex and Will; **Jean Bonneville '96**, husband **Steve Bonneville '92**, daughters **Megan '24** and Kristen; **Stephan Cameron '96**; and **Karin Vaccaro '98**, husband Robert, sons John



and Joseph. Families participated from their own homes, which gave us a chance to connect with friends who live far away and enjoy an evening of goofy texts and game-winning competition. Clearly St. Olaf's excellent liberal arts education helped to set us up for the win. Um! Yah! Yah!" ■ **Elizabeth Ablah '97**, a professor in the Department of Population Health at the University of Kansas School of Medicine-Wichita, received the Samuel J. Crumbine Medal from the Kansas Public Health Association during the association's recent virtual annual conference. ② Elizabeth is the leader of WorkWell KS, an initiative that partners with businesses and organizations to provide resources for creating, supporting, and promoting workplace and employee health and wellness. ■ **Kristina Merchant Dreis '97** was named a 2020 Super Real Estate Agent in the state of Minnesota. ■ **Lynnea Emerson '97** was named a 2020 Forbes' Top Women Wealth Advisor and a 2020 Working Mothers Top Wealth Advisor Mom. ■ The Edvard Grieg Society of Minnesota has released the first professional recording of songs by Norwegian composer Edvard Grieg sung in English. The recording, "Songs from the Heart," features soprano **Melissa Holm-Johansen '98** ③ and pianist Stephen Swanson. ■ **Gretchen Weisgram '99** was recently promoted to vice president of operations for CarServ, an automotive software start-up based in Austin, Texas.

NEW BOOKS BY 1990s OLES

The Historical Dictionary of Hong Kong Cinema, second edition (Rowman and Littlefield, 2020), by **Rachel Braaten '93**

Evolution of an Educator: There is Room for Love in Teaching (Amazon, 2020), by **Ted Hamilton '98**

American Literature & Rhetoric (Bedford, Freeman, and Worth, 2021), by **Katherine Cordes Hall '99**

Framing First Contact: From Catlin to Russell (University of Oklahoma Press, 2020), by **Kate Elliott '98**

2000S

NEW BOOK BY 2000S OLE

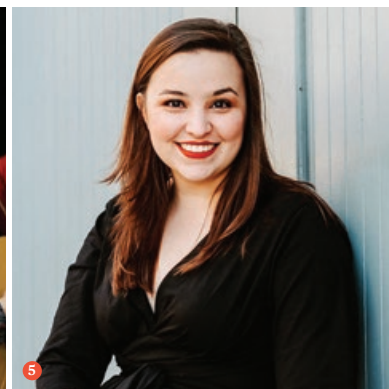
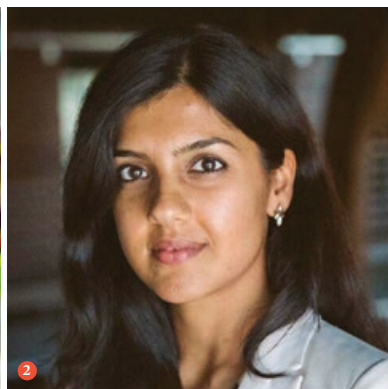
Punk Noodle: Stories and Recipes from a Pop-Up Noodle Shop (self-published, 2020), by **Britta Schroeter Phillips '06**

Andrea Hatleli Murphy '01 was selected by *Twin Cities Business* as one of its 22 Notable Women in Commercial Banking. ■ **Sarah Rasmussen '01** is the new artistic director for Princeton University's McCarter Theater Center. Sarah most recently was the artistic director for the Jungle Theatre in Minneapolis and in 2018 was named Minnesota's Artist of the Year by the Minneapolis *Star Tribune*. Sarah also was the inaugural recipient of the BOLD Theater Women's Leadership Circle grant, which supports the development of women artistic leaders in theater. ■ **Adam Luebke '02** ¹ received a Grammy for Best Choral Performance. His work on the album *Danielpour: The Passion Of Yeshua*, released by Naxos Records, was honored at the 63rd annual Grammy Awards. Adam is the music director of the Buffalo Philharmonic Chorus and an assistant professor of voice and choral music at SUNY Fredonia. Adam received this award with colleagues from the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra and UCLA Chamber Singers. ■ **Bidisha Bhattacharyya '04** ² has been appointed by the Biden administration as senior policy advisor in the Farm Service Agency. Prior accomplishments include serving as director of Climate and Energy Policy at the Centre for American Progress and vice president of Emerging Markets at the impact-investment firm Village Capital, where Bidisha led a global team across India, Mexico, and East Africa to invest in high-impact start-ups

innovating to solve problems across clean energy deployment and financial inclusion. She also spent four years on Capitol Hill as senior energy and agriculture policy adviser to former Senator Al Franken of Minnesota and as energy and agriculture legislative assistant for Congresswoman Betty McCollum of Minnesota. ■ **Sarah Stromberg Flier '04** was named as one of four 2021 National School Counselor of the Year Finalists. ■ After being an art teacher for 10 years, **Maren Miller '04** has moved into a new role as a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) consultant and trainer with the nonprofit Building Bridges in Denver, working with organizations to enact transformational culture change. ■ **Kristen Mueller '05**, an assistant professor of emergency medicine at Washington University Medical School in St. Louis Children's and Barnes-Jewish Hospitals, is among the local health experts addressing two serious epidemics in St. Louis: gun violence and COVID-19. Kirsten, who is among the physicians featured recently in the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, is also working as the physician liaison for Life Outside of Violence, a collaborative gun violence intervention program created by three St. Louis-based research centers and the city's four level-one trauma hospitals. ■ **Brian E. Jacobson '07** was one of 17 attorneys selected in the new partnership class at Faegre Drinker. Brian is an attorney in the firm's investment management practice group in its Minneapolis office. ■ **Brandon Zumwalt '09** has been named partner at the law firm of Johnson, Moody, Schmidt & Kleinhuizen, P.A. Named a Top Attorney and Rising Star by Super Lawyers in 2018, 2019, and 2020, Brandon has been an attorney at the firm since 2016.

2010S

Kelsey R. Thompson '10, assistant director of assessment for the Office of Institutional Effectiveness & Assessment at St. Olaf, married **Jim Reuss '10** on Oct. 5, 2019. ³ Dozens of Oles came to celebrate their special day. Kelsey writes, "I'm a fourth generation Ole: my great-grandmother graduated from St. Olaf in 1921, my paternal grandparents in 1952, and my parents in 1980. So, naturally, we had a lot of Oles at our wedding!" ■ **Alexandra "Alexi" Garrett '12** defended her Ph.D. in early American history at the University of Virginia this past September (2020) and has accepted a two-year postdoctoral fellowship through the Institute of Thomas Paine Studies at Iona College (paired with the University of Virginia Press). ■ **Julida Kochanowski Alter '13** ⁴ has a new CD, *Forged at Christmas*, recorded with her band The Blacksmith's Daughters. The music, created by Julida and her sister Annella, is a combination of folk and rock, with classical instrumentation. Julida also has released two albums with her husband, Sean, under the band name JulyDa. ■ **Natalia Romero Arbeláez '15** ⁵ sang the national anthem at the Minnesota Twins Home Opener at Target Field on April 8. Natalia is an educator and performer who sings in Twin Cities professional vocal ensembles such as VocalEssence and Border CrosSing, while also teaching choir and piano at Harding High School in St. Paul. A former St. Olaf Choir member, Natalia became a U.S. citizen last October. ■ **Matthew Mittelsteadt '15**, an artificial intelligence (AI) policy research fellow at Syracuse University Institute for Security Policy and Law (SPL) has published a well-received, peer-reviewed AI Verification Report as part of a research





partnership between SPL and the Center for Security and Emerging Technology. The rapid integration of artificial intelligence into military systems has raised critical questions of ethics, design, and safety, prompting a call for some form of “AI arms control.” ■ **Hannah D. Olson '15** joined the Spiritual Care Department at Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minn., as a staff chaplain in January 2021. Over the course of the last year, Hannah completed her clinical pastoral education residency at Abbott Northwestern Hospital. She received her M.Div. from Princeton Theological Seminary and an M.A. from Luther Seminary. ■ **Nick Stumo-Langer '15** has graduated from the Humphrey School of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota with a master of public policy degree. ■ When it comes to analyzing big data from the country’s biggest sports league, three Oles are big winners. **Marc Richards '16** ①, **Sam Walczak '14** ②, and **Jack Werner '16** ③, along with teammate Wei Peng, are the champions of the National Football League’s Big Data Bowl. The

annual contest challenges talented members of the analytics community to explore statistical innovations in football. The NFL captures real-time data for every player, on every play, in every situation — anywhere on the field — and contestants in the Big Data Bowl use traditional and Next Gen Stats to analyze and rethink trends and player performance. As a Minneapolis *Star Tribune* story about their success notes, “Peng, Richards, Walczak, and Werner first built a model to determine if a player was in man or zone coverage, based on how they were lined up at the snap and how they moved once the ball was snapped. That allowed them to group coverage assignments into different clusters, build a model predicting how many passes should be completed based on how close a defender is in coverage, and evaluate player performance against those expectations.” Sam currently is a reinsurance broker and catastrophe modeler at Holborn in the Twin Cities, and he also is in the data science master’s degree program at the University of Minnesota. Marc is a Ph.D.

student in the Department of Statistics at the University of Pittsburgh, where he studies applications of spatial statistics in crime across U.S. cities and develops methods for classical statistical inference in machine learning problems. And Jack is a data scientist at Wells Fargo, where he uses text analysis and natural language processing techniques to identify complaints in customer feedback.

NEW BOOK BY 2010s OLE

Semilla: A Collection of Poems (DSTLArts, 2020), by **Jose Richard Aviles '13**

2020s

John Ostermeyer '20 ④ accepted his commission as an Officer of the U.S. Marines on January 23. After completing the six-month course required of all Marine officers at the Basic School in Quantico, Va., John will attend flight school at the Naval Air Station in Pensacola, Florida. 🦅

Alumna selected to work for Vice President Kamala Harris

St. Olaf College alumna **Rachel Palermo '15**, who just finished law school at the University of Notre Dame, has been named the Assistant Press Secretary to Vice President Kamala Harris.

As she steps into her new role with the Biden administration, Palermo joins a communications team that will serve as an important link between the history-making vice president and the public.

While this position promises to be a challenging one, Palermo brings a depth of experience in political communications, reaching all the way back to her time on the Hill. She credits her experiences as both the coordinator of St. Olaf’s Political Awareness Committee and the president of the Student Government Association with piquing her interest in politics.

“I am incredibly excited and honored to be serving in this position,” she says. “Vice President Harris is assembling a talented team that will be ready to face the urgent challenges facing our country, and I look forward to being a part of it.”

Palermo says students who want to make the most of a St. Olaf education should focus on making genuine connections, working hard, advocating for oneself, and keeping a positive outlook. She also points out that many of the requisite skills are part of a liberal arts education, whether they are gained in the classroom, from extracurriculars, or through the St. Olaf network. “St. Olaf instills in us a strong foundation,” she says, “and the sky is the limit for what we can achieve.”

— HARRISON CLARK '21



ALUMNI & FAMILY TRAVEL

The time to actively explore our world together again will be upon us soon! Alumni & Family Travel continues to plan for that future, when we will once again carry on the tradition of experiencing and learning about other cultures — and our own — in order to be more understanding and compassionate. In the meantime, you can travel virtually and get ready for your travels by visiting stolaf.edu/travel.



Here's a sampling of what's coming up:

Vocation Beyond Occupation: Finding Your Path in the Third Chapter of Life | *Spirit in the Desert Retreat Center, Carefree, Arizona* · Led by Deanna Thompson '89; hosted by Brad Hoff '89 | **February 10-13, 2022**

Monarchs in Mexico | **February 13-19, 2022**

Patagonia in Depth: Hiking, Glaciers, Culture & More
Led by Dave Van Wymen '80 and Pat Van Wymen '80
March 15-28, 2022

Struggle for Civil Rights: Religion, Race, and the Work for Justice in the American South
Led by David Booth and Ann Tobin | **April 2022**

Wilderness Adventure in the Boundary Waters
Led by Judy Tegtmeyer & Wes Braker '18 | **June 12-18, 2022**

Journey to the Holy Land · Led by Peder Jothen and Kaethe Schwehn | **June 15-27, 2022**

Theater in London · Led by Diana Postlethwaite and Paul Thiboutot | **September 9-18, 2022**

Remembering Robert Scholz '61

St. Olaf Professor Emeritus of Music Robert "Bob" Scholz died February 21 at age 81 of Parkinson's disease. Scholz was born on November 19, 1939, in Chicago, the younger of two sons of Edmund and Eleonore Scholz. He began piano lessons as a child, adding organ lessons in high school. He lived with his parents and older brother, Richard, and attended Lutheran parochial schools until he moved to Minnesota to begin his collegiate studies at St. Olaf College.

Bob was a tenor in the St. Olaf Choir under Olaf Christiansen and earned a bachelor of arts *magna cum laude* with a major in music education. After graduation, he began work on a master's degree at the University of Illinois, followed by two years of teaching at Campbell College in Buies Creek, North Carolina, after which he began his doctoral studies in choral conducting at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. Following the completion of his graduate studies, he joined the St. Olaf Music Department faculty in 1968.

Bob led the Viking Chorus, the first-year male ensemble, and the St. Olaf Chapel Choir, and he was the founding director of the Campus Choir, which would later become St. Olaf Cantorei. With the Chapel Choir, he presented a major choral-orchestral work each spring in collaboration with the St. Olaf Orchestra, such as the Brahms Requiem, Bach's *St. Matthew Passion*, Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, and Britten's *War Requiem*. Both ensembles performed regularly at Sunday morning services



in Boe Memorial Chapel and on various concerts throughout the academic year, including the St. Olaf Christmas Festival.

In addition to directing these choirs, Bob taught voice lessons, choral conducting, and choral literature. He was an integral part in the planning of the annual Christmas Festival and spent many hours proofreading and editing the programs for that event, which he continued to do even after his retirement. He was also a prolific composer and arranger, and many of his works continue to be performed both at St. Olaf and around the country. He was one of the founding directors of the Male Chorus Festival in Minnesota, an event that continues to this day. He retired from St. Olaf in 2005 after teaching for 37 years.

"Dr. Bob," as his students affectionately called him, was considered a pastoral figure in the Music Department by students and faculty alike. Over the course of his tenure, he touched the lives of thousands of Oles. His light and clear tenor voice was a fixture in the hallways of the Christiansen Hall of Music, and many of his students went on to become members of the St. Olaf Choir and music teachers in their own right. Bruce Benson, St. Olaf pastor emeritus and one of Scholz's longest and dearest friends, said this of his friend: "Bob Scholz never gave in to the pressure of choosing between being a caring teacher or an excellent choral conductor; he achieved choral excellence by caring always about the whole lives of his students. Bless him for that."

Anton Armstrong '78, conductor of the St. Olaf Choir, said this of the man he called his "musical godfather": "When I returned to St. Olaf in 1990 as faculty member in the Music Department and conductor of the St. Olaf Choir, Bob was always a supportive colleague and friend. He was perhaps the most "pastoral" colleague I've been blessed to know in my 30 years at St. Olaf College. Bob was a model of the scholar/teacher/conductor who was also a gifted composer. Bob was also the exemplary servant-leader, nurturing thousands of students who had the privilege and joy of singing with him in the Chapel Choir, Viking Chorus, and Campus Choir or being his private voice student or studying conducting with him during his years of faithful service to St. Olaf College."

Bob was a man of strong faith. He and his wife, Cora Wingerd Scholz '61, were members of St. John's Lutheran Church since moving to Northfield, and they attended services consistently, even as his Parkinson's progressed over the past several years. He is survived by Cora, his wife of 56 years; their five children, Miriam Scholz-Carlson '90, Maria Boda '92 (Stephan '90), David Scholz '94 (Dara '98), Wendy Scholz, and Carol Smith '99 (David); and seven grandchildren, Helena, Anna, and Eva Scholz-Carlson; Mae and Beno Boda; Luka Scholz; and Fiona Smith.

A memorial service will be held to celebrate Bob's life on July 9 at 10:30 a.m., in Boe Memorial Chapel, St. Olaf College. The service also will be streamed at stolaf.edu/multimedia/play/drbobmemorial.

Remembering Barbara Helling

Associate Professor Emerita of Behavioral Science Dr. Barbara “Bobbi” Helling was defeated in an unfair fight with COVID-19 on November 8, 2020, at Three Links Care Center in Northfield. She had deplored but



accepted the necessary isolation that the pandemic required, and her vivacious and social 93-year-old self was limited but never lost.

Bobbi likely mixed her distinctive independent-mindedness and deep affections from a very young age. She was born Barbara Anne Pearson on September 8, 1927, to Per Gustav and Lydia Pearson. After her mother passed and her father was struggling to raise her, she was adopted by Robert and Lola Burns of Covina, California, in 1935. She recounted early days of traveling around California

with appreciation of the people who cared for her and supported her. She paid that caring forward to students, friends, and family throughout her life.

Bobbi graduated from Pomona College and departed the U.S. to teach for three years at the American Collegiate Institute in Izmir, Turkey, where she learned to speak fluent Turkish. She told many stories of her cross-cultural adventures and educational experiments as a new teacher. She also described meeting a charming George Helling, whom she married in 1951. The couple took multiple trips to Turkey in subsequent years, living in the village of Zek and gathering data and insights for their graduate dissertations. Later, as an advisor at St. Olaf, Bobbi encouraged young women to travel, and she celebrated their adventures of discovery and newfound perspectives when they returned to the Hill.

Bobbi earned her Ph.D. in educational psychology from the University of Nebraska in 1966 and worked for the Job Corps in Omaha. In 1969, she and her husband joined the St. Olaf faculty while also establishing a farm and building a house on 90 acres in Webster. An early supporter of St. Olaf’s then-new Paracollege, Bobbi cared enormously about the balances between disciplinary knowledge and integrative thinking that the program aspired to offer. She knew there were charismatic professors and demanding ones; faculty who brought students into a discipline’s thinking and those who broadened the focus to interdisciplinary connections. She was certain that it was the mix of talents and passions that made the Paracollege community so vibrant and nurturing. Her own tutorials in educational psychology were rigorous as well as practical: she wanted theory-based projects that grappled with complex realities. She was always eager to think about Piaget and Vygotsky and the intersections of human development with social interactions in meaning-making.

Bobbi’s leadership in the St. Olaf Teaching-Learning Center was also important, and she was always interested in the ways that faculty strategized to engage students, especially the opportunities they created for students to exercise independent thought and articulate judgments. Years after she retired, Helling wrote former students about their publications, questioning their perspectives and homing in on their definitions and assumptions. Bobbi was also deeply kind, and quick to praise accomplishments. She thanked newly minted authors for what they taught her, and avidly kept up holiday and other correspondence.

Bobbi exemplified the lifelong learner. After her husband died in 2005 and when later serious illness took away a lot of her mobility, she moved in as the first resident of Millstream Commons in Northfield. Her sunny corner apartment was full of books, photographs, and artifacts of her travels. She loved her motorized wheelchair and scooted around in snow, leaves, and summer heat, enjoying meals out and good conversation. Bobbi participated in book groups and attended lectures; she was the pen pal of at least one elementary school student; and she enjoyed board game nights and other opportunities to meet new Oles.

Bobbi always spoke and wrote enthusiastically of her children, Amy, Emilie, Matthew ’83, and Joel, as their lives and careers spread some of them around the country. She also was cherished by five grandchildren and one great grandson.

— Laura Beilfuss Turchi ’82

Remembering William Green ’77

William E. “Bill” Green died on April 13, 2021, in Minneapolis, three days after his 66th birthday. Bill’s early years, he said in a 2002 *St. Olaf Magazine* story, were shaped by the 1965 Watts riots in South Central L.A. and, in the aftermath of the riots, tunes like Curtis Mayfield’s *We’re a Winner* and *Keep On Pushing* struck a personal chord. His high school, Jordan High School, was located on the street where the rioting took place. “It was the beginning of black power and black pride,” he said. “We were all driven by these songs in the early 1970s, declarations of pride for those of us fighting for civil rights.”

A political science and sociology double major at St. Olaf, Bill was a former USA Track and Field standout, competing in the Los Angeles Coliseum as a high school sprinter and hurdler before going on to St. Olaf, where he ran track (high hurdles were his favorite track event) and played wide receiver on the Ole football team. Bill joined the Office of Admissions staff in 1986, where he



began recruiting and inspiring minority urban youth from strong ethnic neighborhoods. Bill, who was a pioneer in the college’s Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) work, returned to campus on Founder’s Day in 2017 to speak during the 50th anniversary celebration of the founding of the Cultural Union for Black Expression (CUBE).

Bill held a number of positions at St. Olaf between 1986 and 2012, when he left the college. In 2002, as assistant dean of Community Life and Diversity and director of Multicultural Affairs

and Community Outreach, Bill and his team developed cultural and educational programs designed to create an inclusive environment for multicultural students. Bill and his team also partnered with St. Olaf TRIO program staff to create more opportunities for multicultural, low-income, and first-generation students. His commitment to St. Olaf students led him to additionally serve as acting director of Minority Services, interim director of Multicultural Student Services, a leader in the Multicultural Alums Mentoring Project, and an assistant coach for the men’s track and field team, focusing his coaching efforts on the hurdles and jumps.

More recently, Bill was the director of Multicultural Engagement and Community Outreach at North Central University (NCU) in Minneapolis, and, since 2016, served as an assistant coach for the NCU men’s and women’s track and field/cross country teams.

Bill’s St. Olaf friends and colleagues mourn his passing. “He filled the St. Olaf community with his faith, love, and compassion,” said Anton Armstrong ’78, whose friendship with Bill began in their student days on the Hill. Bill is remembered for his patience, warmth, grace, and humor and for his “commitment to others without a hint of self-promotion or self-righteousness.” Bill’s friends remember him as a great jazz drummer, a competitive basketball player and excellent three-point shooter during “noon ball,” and someone who overcame obstacles with courage and grace. Bill accompanied St. Olaf Religion Professor Eric Lund on an International Studies South Africa Interim in 2004, where, as the only black man on the trip, he was always sought out by people in the townships and rural villages. Lund recalled a church service in the township of Memolodi in which Bill was the center of attention at the social gathering following the service. “On the spot,” says Lund, “they gave him an African name, *Jabulani*, which means ‘happiness’ or ‘rejoice’” in Zulu.”

“Bill exemplified a deep reverence and respect for everyone and was a tireless supporter of minority students and their wish to celebrate their identities and religious and cultural traditions. His spirit was humane, gentle, and compassionate,” said St. Olaf Religion Professor Anant Rambachan. “Peace to Bill and strength to his family.”

Devoted to Christ, an elder and pastor in his church, Bill brought steadfast faith to everything he did. He is survived by his wife of 40 years, Nannette “Nann”; children, William “Lil Bill” Green ’06, Patience, Leora, and Chad; and a grandchild, Jayce.

— Carole Engblom



Future Oles

Erik Hadland '80 and Natsuko Hadland, a daughter, Ingeborg Oline Gretchen McPherson Weisgram '99 and Marcus Ocasí, a son, Carson ¹
 Sarah Sevcik Tummala '04 and Abhishek Reddy Tummala, a daughter, Aadrika ²
 Eliza Larson '05 and Eric Cook, a daughter, Maren
 Amber Collett Terway '07 and Tim Terway, a daughter, Linden ⁷
 Laura Melcher '08 and Will Amundson '08, a son, Anders
 Margaret Barter Gipson '09 and Philip Gipson '09, a son, John
 Carrie Stillman Irwin '09 and Keith Irwin '09, a son, Ezra ⁵
 Sam Mariotti Jorgensen '09 and Sean Jorgensen, a son, Tue ⁶
 Kayli Henry Reece '09 and Taylor Reece '09, a son, Theodore
 Cia Guglielmina Osterhouse '10 and David Osterhouse '10, a daughter, Lilah ⁹
 Heidi Seltz Christenson '11 and Mark Christenson, a daughter, Signe
 Francine Boylan Kuplic '11 and Andrew Kuplic '11, a son, Grant ³
 Patricia Lamas '12 and Jordan Peterson, a daughter, Clara ⁴
 Amelia Stonesifer Yingst '12 and Evan Yingst, a son, Walter
 Olivia Koester Alvshere '13 and Matt Alvshere '13, a son, Walter ⁸

Weddings

Ronald Johnson '71 and Alison Johnson, Sept. 5, 2020
 Peter Aarestad '98 and Sarah Aarestad, Aug. 19, 2020
 Sarah Sevcik Tummala '04 and Abhishek Reddy Tummala, Aug. 24, 2019
 Christine Hinrichs Garrison '06 and Ollie Garrison '06, Sept. 18, 2020
 Alison Schultz '09 and Dylan Canfield, Oct. 5, 2018
 Patricia Lamas '12 and Jordan Peterson, Oct. 6, 2018
 Morgan Smith '12 and Chase Liaboe '12, Dec. 12, 2020
 Alison McKeever Blake '15 and Joseph Blake '15, Oct. 25, 2020
 Anna Koester Dunbar '15 and Joe Dunbar, Nov. 14, 2020
 Michaela Liesenberg '15 and Alec Holen, Sept. 26, 2020
 Mei Mei Siu McKay '16 and Daniel McKay, Oct. 18, 2020
 Joy Smith Berthelsen '17 and Erik Berthelsen '17, Aug. 29, 2020
 Samantha Binns Holdahl '18 and Ethan Holdahl '18, Sept. 17, 2020

Deaths

Richard Thompsen '41, Mount Pleasant, Wis., Jan. 27, 2021
 *Telford "Ted" Wamstad '41, Mclean, Va., Jan. 26, 2021
 Marcella "Marcy" Johnson '42, Sun City West, Ariz., Jan. 25, 2021
 *Elsa "Toni" Mayer Kingdon '43, Mullens, W.Va., Jan. 3, 2021
 Alice Byom Kvamme '43, Madison, Wis., Jan. 7, 2021
 Marjorie "Marj" Westegard Skafte '43, Cotton, Minn., Oct. 25, 2020
 Jeannette Olsen '44, Oak Creek, Wis., Oct. 23, 2020
 *Merlin Olson '44, Medina, Ohio, Jan. 11, 2021

Kay Winger Blair '45, St. Paul, Minn., March 10, 2021
 Doris Ottem Daiker '45, Oregon City, Ore., Dec. 8, 2020
 Dorothy "Betty" Greene Mahon '45, Little Rock, Ark., Oct. 28, 2020
 Violet "Vi" Wekseth Risch '45, Appleton, Minn., Feb. 12, 2021
 Marilyn Schrader Schroeder '45, Owatonna, Minn., Feb. 2, 2021
 Eileen Dahl Arvesen '46, Waseca, Minn., Dec. 4, 2020
 Vada Lind Higbee '46, Seattle, Dec. 17, 2020
 Henrietta "Henri" Hillestad Nelson '46, Northfield, Minn., Nov. 23, 2020
 Genevieve Wickman Follingstad '47, Sister Bay, Wis., Nov. 1, 2020
 Carol Peterson Mereness '47, Rosemount, Minn., Oct. 30, 2020
 Shirley Dahlquist Montan '47, Wadena, Minn., Dec. 16, 2020
 Ruth "Lois" Sederstrom Peterson '47, Eden Prairie, Minn., March 14, 2021
 Barbara Kirn Roberts '47, Vashon, Wash., Nov. 13, 2020
 Dorothy Holtan Zelgart '47, Arlington Heights, Ill., Sept. 29, 2020
 Mary Sherry Eggen '48, Bloomington, Minn., Feb. 10, 2021
 Dorothy Cole Lace '48, Anoka, Minn., Oct. 10, 2020
 *Virginia Madson Lease '48, Davenport, Iowa, Dec. 16, 2020
 Lucille Michelson Smith '48, Chaska, Minn., Nov. 13, 2020
 Anna "Ann" Fardal Carlberg '49, White Bear Lake, Minn., Oct. 25, 2020
 Lorraine Hansen Enger '49, Brooklyn, Mich., Jan. 6, 2021
 *Roger Johnsen '49, Philadelphia, Dec. 9, 2020
 Anna "Anne" Knutson Kanten '49, Crookston, Minn., Dec. 7, 2020
 *Philip Luttio '49, St. Paul, Minn., Dec. 7, 2020
 Rose "Micky" Mickelson '49, Farmington, Minn., Sept. 23, 2020
 *Philip Olson '49, Belgrade, Minn., Feb. 23, 2021
 Edwin Benedict '50, Charles City, Iowa, Oct. 20, 2020
 *Harvey Berg '50, Neenah, Wis., March 3, 2021
 *Joseph "Joe" Fjelstad '50, Plymouth, Minn., Jan. 16, 2021
 *Kenneth Hodges '50, Minneapolis, Nov. 2, 2020
 Myrna Hanson Johnson '50, Northfield, Minn., March 23, 2021
 *Oscar "Milford" Langehough '50, Golden Valley, Minn., March 18, 2021
 Orville "Orv" Langhough '50, Chetek, Wis., Jan. 2, 2021
 Kirsten Oglænd Milbrath '50, Buffalo, N.Y., Jan. 12, 2021
 *Francis "Fran" Miller '50, Faribault, Minn., Sept. 15, 2020
 Richard "Dick" Olson '50, Minnetonka, Minn., Feb. 13, 2021
 *Charles "Chuck" Solem '50, Alexandria, Va., March 4, 2021
 *Omer "Joe" Sperstad '50, Mukwonago, Wis., Nov. 3, 2020
 Barbara Ebricht Varenhorst '50, Yakima, Wash., Feb. 24, 2021
 Oryen "Reenie" Peterson Benrud '51, Goodhue, Minn., Nov. 3, 2020
 *Thomas Grimsrud '51, Minneapolis, Nov. 5, 2019
 Ramona Swenson McKee '51, Des Moines, Iowa, Sept. 26, 2020
 Marjorie "Marge" Wahlberg McKone '51, Winston Salem, N.C., Nov. 18, 2020

- Herman "Ham" Muus '51, Grand Marais, Minn., Dec. 18, 2020
 Nancy Helland Nelson '51, St. Paul, Minn., Jan. 23, 2021
 Merece Engelstad Olson '51, Rochester, Minn., Dec. 6, 2020
 *Marlin Benrud '52, Goodhue, Minn., Oct. 30, 2020
 Dwight Hovland '52, Vancouver, Wash., Sept. 23, 2020
 Norma Laingen Marsh '52, Hastings, Minn., Dec. 30, 2020
 Carol Nelson Schafer '52, Mahanomen, Minn., Feb. 26, 2021
 Avis Hagberg Walter '52, Glyndon, Minn., Nov. 16, 2020
 Phyllis "Joan" Norman Welch '52, Temple, Texas, Dec. 12, 2020
 Barbara Cleve Anderson '53, Caldwell, Idaho, Dec. 21, 2020
 Grace "Dorcas" Knudsen Doering '53, Trophy Club, Texas, Dec. 24, 2020
 Duane Hoven '53, Rochester, Minn., Dec. 24, 2020
 Curtis Johnson '53, Rochester, Minn., Oct. 10, 2020
 Richard Kottman '53, Ames, Iowa, Jan. 1, 2021
 *Andrew "Andy" Oppedahl '53, Dubuque, Iowa, Nov. 26, 2020
 Richard "Dick" Beckmen '54, Brandon, S.D., Nov. 15, 2020
 Patricia "Patty" Bohm-Bergren '54, Pound Ridge, N.Y., March 14, 2021
 *Burton "Burt" Grimes '54, Edina, Minn., Feb. 1, 2021
 Paul "Pug" Johnson '54, Minneapolis, March 17, 2021
 Carolyn Turner Moulton '54, La Jolla, Calif., April 1, 2020
 *Richard "Dick" Nelson '54, State College, Pa., Dec. 22, 2020
 Arlene Bjorngaard Ostermeier '54, Whitewater, Wis., March 21, 2021
 *Magnus "Bud" Peterson '54, Alexandria, Minn., Feb. 22, 2021
 *Charles "Chuck" Romstad '54, Madison, Wis., Dec. 30, 2020
 Marjorie "Margie" Thofson Schoeppler '54, Freeborn, Minn., Oct. 14, 2020
 William "Bill" Dahlberg '55, Mukilteo, Wash., March 12, 2020
 Harold Dokmo '55, San Diego, Nov. 19, 2020
 Owen Gaasedelen '55, Northfield, Minn., Nov. 1, 2020
 Sarah Utgaard Ozment '55, Hobson, Mont., Dec. 25, 2020
 James "Jim" Paulsen '55, Palm Springs, Calif., Oct. 6, 2020
 William "Bill" Redman '55, Madison, Wis., Dec. 18, 2020
 Solveig Solem '55, Cromwell, Conn., Feb. 14, 2021
 Lois Borwege Stillwell '55, Pillager, Minn., Oct. 9, 2020
 Roald Tweet '55, Rock Island, Ill., Nov. 4, 2020
 Ronald "Ron" Wick '55, Lake Bluff, Ill., Jan. 19, 2021
 Anne Frisch Bruechert '56, Manitowoc, Wis., Dec. 3, 2020
 *Charles Coon '56, Littleton, Colo., Nov. 18, 2018
 *Alvin "Al" Corcoran '56, Edina, Minn., Nov. 7, 2020
 *John Edstrom '56, Burke, Va., Feb. 5, 2021
 *Bruce Halverson '56, Edina, Minn., Oct. 16, 2020
 David "Dave" Hampton '56, Waverly, Iowa, Oct. 5, 2020
 Richard "Dick" Hanson '56, Germantown Hills, Ill., Feb. 13, 2021
 Katherine "Kathy" Roe Jacobson '56, Mendota Heights, Minn., Dec. 16, 2020
 Betty Bly Jensen '56, Hutchinson, Minn., Nov. 2, 2020
 *Richard "Dick" Lorentson '56, Lakeville, Minn., Nov. 29, 2020
 Ruth Stolen Peterson '56, Bemidji, Minn., Oct. 9, 2020
 Donna Nelson Rothermel '56, Richmond, Va., Jan. 31, 2021
 Edward "Ted" Smith '56, Grass Valley, Calif., Nov. 18, 2020
 Alice Alexander Dokken '57, Brewster, N.Y., Nov. 5, 2020
 James "Jim" Gustason '57, Minneapolis, Oct. 21, 2020
 Joan-Nell Bowron Macfadden '57, Billings, Mont., Jan. 10, 2021
 Mary Wee Maxwell '57, Madison, Wis., Dec. 28, 2020
 Elaine Forsblad Bratland '58, Shoreview, Minn., Dec. 17, 2020
 Virginia "Jinni" Narverud Gaasedelen-Olson '58, Albert Lea, Minn., Feb. 8, 2021
 *Joel Lund '58, Milan, Minn., March 18, 2021
 Margaret "Peg" Edwards Overlund '58, La Mesa, Calif., Jan. 17, 2021
 Warren Peterson '58, O'Fallon, Mo., Nov. 28, 2020
 Gary Rasmusson '58, North Tonawanda, N.Y., March 3, 2020
 Barbara Bentley Thompson '58, Broomfield, Colo., Jan. 14, 2021
 Iola "Wahli" Aalbue Vanstrom '58, Duluth, Minn., Nov. 1, 2020
 Elden Banitt '59, Woodbury, Minn., Dec. 29, 2020
 *William "Bill" Johnson '59, Sun Prairie, Wis., Dec. 19, 2020
 Alvin Peterson '59, Green Bay, Wis., Oct. 27, 2020
 Robert "Bob" Rosenthal '59, Dupont, Ind., Feb. 26, 2021
 *Delford "Del" Becke '60, Mundelein, Ill., Feb. 22, 2021
 *Alwood "Woody" Dokken '60, Benson, Minn., Oct. 7, 2020
 Robert "Bob" Gunnon '60, Rochester, Minn., Feb. 4, 2021
 Donald Haines '60, Minneapolis, Dec. 19, 2020
 Martha Wiggert Murphy '60, Sierra Madre, Calif., Sept. 18, 2020
 Philip "Phil" Roe '60, Minneapolis, Dec. 31, 2020
 Dennis Sorheim '60, Edina, Minn., Feb. 12, 2021
 *John Urnes '60, Webster, Wis., Feb. 10, 2021
 Rose Ann Ennis Korbel '61, Owatonna, Minn., Oct. 26, 2020
 Jon Rondestvedt '61, Northfield, Minn., Feb. 18, 2020
 Robert "Bob" Scholz '61, Northfield, Minn., Feb. 21, 2021
 Charlotte Stark Chell '62, Madison, Wis., Dec. 28, 2020
 *Dennis Falk '62, Sunburg, Minn., Nov. 28, 2020
 Thomas Gunning '62, Franklin, Ind., Feb. 15, 2021
 Gwen Domes Oech '62, Beach, N.D., Sept. 28, 2020
 Sandra "Sandy" Farmer Pedersen '62, Newton, N.J., Feb. 16, 2021
 Mary Molgaard Zellmer '62, Atlantic, Iowa, Nov. 25, 2020
 Lorraine Paulson Clay '63, Detroit, Oct. 25, 2020
 *Wallace "Wally" Engel '63, South Haven, Minn., Nov. 20, 2020
 *Robert Giacoletti '63, Tullahoma, Tenn., March 18, 2018
 Thomas "Bud" Meberg, '63, Lakewood, N.J., March 12, 2021
 Phoebe Berg '64, Minneapolis, Dec. 31, 2020
 Laurence "Larry" "Bear" Carlson '64, Grand Marais, Minn., Nov. 8, 2020
 Robert "Bob" Parta '64, St. Paul, Minn., March 6, 2021
 *Olaf Aanrud '65, Iola, Wis., March 10, 2021
 Judith "Judy" Eide Brandt '65, Cambridge, Wis., Oct. 25, 2020
 David Heise '65, Winona, Minn., Nov. 20, 2020
 Sue Heinritz Jones '65, Menominee, Mich., Feb. 3, 2021
 Dianne Rood-Kiesz '65, Webster, S.D., March 11, 2021
 Barbarajan Syverud Sather '65, Stillwater, Minn., Nov. 21, 2020
 Philip "Phil" Scheevel '65, Spicer, Minn., Feb. 23, 2021
 Irene "Renee" Gubrud Finch '66, Huntington, N.Y., Nov. 3, 2020
 Nancy Jacquat Foster '66, Fort Collins, Colo., Feb. 25, 2021
 Sheryl Anderson Renslo '66, Minneapolis, Feb. 9, 2021
 Kathryn "Kathy" Iverson Bratly '67, Edina, Minn., Jan. 9, 2021
 James Kunz '67, New Bern, N.C., Jan. 4, 2021
 Camilla "Cammie" Gjellstad Sorenson '67, Ada, Minn., Oct. 10, 2020
 Roger Fredericksen '68, Bainbridge Island, Wash., July 12, 2020
 Kathleen "Kathy" Hass '68, Kihei, Hawaii, Jan. 20, 2021
 Jon Hersch '68, Medina, Minn., Nov. 21, 2020
 Sandra "Sandi" Knoche '68, Minneapolis, Nov. 2, 2020
 *Michael Kvamme '68, Clayton, Ga., Feb. 25, 2021
 Paula Quale Swanson '68, Bismarck, N.D., Oct. 17, 2020
 Charles Wensman '68, Minneapolis, Oct. 30, 2020
 Susan Brown Southworth '69, Menlo Park, Calif., Dec. 11, 2020
 Judith "Judy" Johnson Esse '70, St. Paul, Minn., Nov. 9, 2020
 Constance "Connie" Kranz Fleck '70, Shakopee, Minn., March 12, 2021
 *Bruce Blanchard '71, Baton Rouge, La., 2016
 Clifford "Andy" Crandall '71, Mauston, Wis., Oct. 15, 2020
 Richard Moe '71, East Lansing, Mich., Jan. 27, 2021
 Robert "Bob" Sundberg '71, Hamel, Minn., May 24, 2019
 Roman Kopp '72, Northfield, Minn., Feb. 1, 2021
 Claudia Remark Johnson '73, Minneapolis, Feb. 8, 2021
 John Shearer '73, Pittsboro, N.C., Jan. 12, 2021
 James Spencer '73, Manhattan, Kan., Dec. 12, 2020
 Brenda Meyer Hylle '74, Blaine, Minn., Feb. 25, 2021
 Stephen "Mark" Swanson '74, Lakeville, Minn., Feb. 28, 2020
 Stephen Madson '76, Golden Valley, Minn., Oct. 19, 2020
 Frederick "Fred" Brown '77, La Crosse, Wis., Dec. 6, 2020
 Vicky Jones '78, Yakima, Wash., Jan. 26, 2021
 Karen Wicklund '78, Lakewood Ranch, Fla., July 25, 2020
 Karl Spieker '79, Eau Claire, Wis., Sept. 10, 2017
 Jeffrey Selvaggio '82, Dunnellon, Fla., Dec. 14, 2020
 Pamela "Pam" Goeske Kruse '84, Everett, Wash., Sept. 25, 2020
 Daniel Gionet '86, Edina, Minn., Dec. 31, 2020
 Olaf Medhus '86, Las Vegas, Oct. 18, 2017
 John Mittelstaedt '86, Oakwood, Ohio, Dec. 8, 2020
 John "Michael" Kioschos '87, Salt Lake City, Aug. 4, 2019
 Susan Reid '87, Golden Valley, Minn., Dec. 18, 2020
 Amy Hahn '89, Hutchinson, Minn., Oct. 16, 2020
 Amy Strauss Hird '91, Mount Vernon, Iowa, Sept. 29, 2020
 Anthony "Tony" Bolstorff '97, Rosemount, Minn., Nov. 7, 2020
 Maria "Estela" Gutierrez Poetzinger '99, Bowling Green, Ohio, Dec. 5, 2020
 Jessica Albright '09, St. Paul, Minn., Dec. 27, 2020
 Marcia Barck '10, New Prague, Minn., March 2, 2021
 Daniel Shellberg Antrim '14, Austin, Texas, April 26, 2020
 Bobak "Bobby" Barjasteh '16, Northfield, Minn., Oct. 19, 2020
 Ayodele Bandele '18, Ikeja, Lagos, Nigeria, Jan. 11, 2021
 *VETERAN

The Roots of Tradition

BY JEFF SAUVE

IN THE MAY 1890 ISSUE of the college newspaper, *Manitou Messenger*, a sentence read, “Two Freshmen carried an evergreen six miles last year for Arbor Day.” The names of the two young men and the challenges they endured to secure and carry the tree six miles to campus are long forgotten, but one possibility is that they were replacing one of the pine trees lost in a grass fire that occurred at the bottom of Old Main Hill in April 1889.

At the time, the original St. Olaf baseball field was located at the bottom of the hill. In preparing the site for the upcoming spring season, the ballplayers intended a simple burn, but the fire quickly burned out of control. The young men frantically raced to extinguish the blaze before it reached Old Main, a building that not only served as a dormitory for male students and a residence for some faculty and staff but also provided the college’s only classroom space. Fortunately, the only damage sustained was to the trees recently planted along the roadside.

Those tree plantings had been part of a series of improvements made to the fledgling college’s grounds, starting immediately after the dedication of Old Main in 1878. In those first years, the woods were cleared of superfluous trees and undergrowth, and room was made for systematic tree plantings carried out annually. By 1890, the college had purchased two tracts of land adjacent to the campus. The previous owner had cut down the maples, leaving numerous unsightly stumps behind in what would later be known as Norway Valley. St. Olaf groundskeepers set to planting 1,000 evergreen seedlings, ensuring their survival by constantly watering them throughout the summer months. The sight of the boughs of these still towering sentinels elicit awe today.

Arbor Day, first commemorated in Nebraska in 1872, was such a significant event at St. Olaf that students were given a holiday to participate in tree planting activities, no matter what the weather was like. In 1893, nearly 1,000 more trees were planted. As a reward for their efforts, an evening gathering featuring coffee and cake was hosted by the women faculty. The Arbor Day tradition continued. In 1897, a release from classes was granted on the condition that every student plant at least one tree. Freshly made donuts were served afterward.

It was also in 1897 that the college’s commitment to environmental stewardship extended beyond the campus’s boundaries. The St. Olaf president at the time, Thorbjørn N. Mohn, served on the executive committee of the Northfield Improvement Association. He joined other community leaders in advocating for the preservation of a stately elm tree at the west end of Third Street. The city council granted the request in early June, saving the tree from the ax and officially naming it the “St. Olaf Elm.”

Before heading home that same summer, St. Olaf baseball players petitioned the college to let them play one extra game with hometown rival Carleton College as a fundraiser for the St. Olaf Elm. The request was granted, so long as the proceeds be used to build a fence around the elm. On Monday, June 14, despite searing temperatures, listless play, and a combined 19 fielding errors, a very large crowd enjoyed the match, where Carleton prevailed by 11 to 8.

The following October, six seniors of the Class of 1898, including Lars W. Boe, future president of St. Olaf (1918–1942), erected an iron fence that enclosed the beautiful elm. It was reported in the



From 1897 until 1921, the St. Olaf Elm — and the tiny slice of land surrounding it — held the distinction of being the smallest city park in the United States.

Messenger that the work was very satisfactory, the “whole thing being done without a single accident, excepting an unpleasant experience with a kettle of boiling tar.”

The small triangle of land with its solitary inhabitant, the St. Olaf Elm, thus became the smallest city park in the country, a distinction held until the landmark elm was removed in January 1921 due to severe deterioration.

The Arbor Day celebrations evolved into Earth Day celebrations in 1970, and thousands of seedlings have been planted by students on the St. Olaf Natural Lands. The college’s deeply rooted commitment to tree restoration, now approaching 150 years, may best be expressed by a heartwarming anecdote by author Nils N. Ronning (1870–1962) about former St. Olaf President Lars Boe. Ronning, who once enjoyed a walk with Boe along the campus’s winding, wooded paths, wrote, “We came down to the quiet, secluded, cathedral-like Norway Valley. He went over to the stateliest tree, put his hand on its huge trunk, and said, ‘The trees are my friends.’” 🌳

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



OLDS CREATE

A LASTING IMPACT

Following a meaningful nursing career,
Lois Anne Indorf '71 included the college
in her charitable estate plan.



“The process was easy, and I got to choose the impact I wanted to create. St. Olaf prepared me well — I want someone else to have a great experience too.”

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

PARTING SHOT



SPECIAL VACCINE DELIVERY. With a four-person team that included one pharmacist and two nurses, Doctor of Osteopathy Katrine Bengaard '02 (far right) traveled by plane and dog sled into rural northern Alaska to deliver the COVID-19 vaccine to Native American elders and other remote village residents.