

# Lives of Worth and Service

The strength of the St. Olaf College community is reaffirmed once again in the outstanding accomplishments of the 2010 alumni award recipients. During the Founders Day celebration on Friday, November 5, seven alumni will receive recognition for their lifelong achievements and professional contributions that embody the values of a St. Olaf education turned into action.

By Alyssa Anne Lynne '12

## DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARD

### Russell A. Anderson '64

Hopkins, Minnesota | Retired Chief Justice  
Minnesota Supreme Court

**D**URING A FOUR-DECADE LONG LEGAL CAREER, Russell A. Anderson attained an exceptional reputation not only as a gifted and ethical attorney, but also as a fair-minded and intellectually talented judge. Anderson epitomizes many of the values of St. Olaf College: competence, integrity, and compassion.

He credits St. Olaf's emphasis on liberal arts in preparing him for his career. "I believe in liberal arts education. It prepares you for a richness of life beyond any occupation. I've carried St. Olaf's emphasis on service with me throughout my life," says Anderson.

After earning his Juris Doctor from the University of Minnesota in 1968, Anderson served in the U.S. Navy Judge Advocate General's Corps (JAG) during the Vietnam War, rising to the position of base legal officer in Sasebo, Japan, during a three-year tour of duty. Later, while working in Washington, D.C., Anderson earned a Master of Laws in international law at George Washington University. Returning home to Bemidji, Minnesota, Anderson added private practice to his experience, as well as service as a Beltrami County attorney from 1978 to 1982. He was subsequently appointed as a district court judge in Minnesota's Ninth Judicial District, a position he held with distinction until 1998, when he was appointed an associate justice of the Minnesota Supreme Court by Governor Arnie Carlson. In 2006 Anderson's career reached its apex when Governor Tim

Pawlenty named him chief justice of the Minnesota Supreme Court.

Anderson's dedication to improving the judicial system is evidenced by his work with former Chief Justice Kathleen Blatz on restructuring the trial and appellate courts into a single, state-funded third branch of Minnesota government. Anderson continues to promote multicultural diversity and fairness in the courts and has long had a special interest in addressing and preventing domestic violence.

Anderson has supported the college in numerous



ways, from being an active participant in his class reunions to his financial support of the college as well as an important networking resource for St. Olaf graduates. He has been an active member of the Lutheran Church throughout his life and has a deep and abiding love for both St. Olaf and his family, all Oles – his wife, Kristin Ostby Anderson '66, Rebecca '90, John '91, and Sarah Anderson Harriss '98 – who have been an integral part of his life and career.

## DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARD

### Linda Olson Keller '74

Eagan, Minnesota | Clinical Associate Professor  
University of Minnesota School of Nursing

**L**INDA OLSON KELLER HAS BEEN A CLEAR, CONSISTENT VOICE for public health over the past three decades, serving in both practice and educational sectors. She is nationally recognized for her unique ability to translate research and theory into practice. Currently a clinical associate professor at the University of Minnesota, Olson Keller spent twenty years of her career at the Office of Public Health Practice at the Minnesota Department of Health, where she focused on redefining population-based public health practice in an era of health care reform. Her model, known as the Public Health Intervention Wheel, can be found in nursing textbooks and nursing education programs (including St. Olaf's nursing program) and is often utilized as a framework for organizing services provided by public health departments.



Olson Keller's exemplary reputation stems from her years of practical work improving the health of communities through public health nursing initiatives. She has received more than \$2.7 million in grants in the past decade to enhance public health nursing practice, education, and leadership development. Olson Keller has also published a significant body of work and frequently presents to state, national, and international audiences, often drawing on St. Olaf experiences to make her point. "My years at St. Olaf developed my critical-thinking skills and commitment to social justice," she says. "I discovered my passion for public health nursing during my senior Interim experience working in Cary, Mississippi, at the height of the civil rights movement.

She was inducted as a fellow in the American Academy of Nursing in 2007, a select honor given to only a small number of American nurses in recognition of their outstanding achievements in the profession. Olson Keller was also selected for the prestigious Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Executive Nurse Leadership Fellowship and continues to serve as a board member and treasurer of that organization's alumni association. She currently serves as chair of both the American Public Health Association's Section of Public Health Nursing and the Minnesota Public Health Association Leadership Committee.

Olson Keller contributes her professional expertise to local projects committed to improving public health, such as the Henry Street Consortium and the Elderberry Institute Living at Home Block Nurse Program. As a member of the Minnesota Intercollegiate Nursing Consortium Advisory Committee, Olson Keller served as a consultant in the recent revision of the St. Olaf nursing curriculum and regularly offers professional opportunities to St. Olaf College faculty. Olson Keller is married to an Ole, David Keller '74, and their two sons are also Oles, Matthew '02 and Peter '12.

## ALUMNI ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

**Helen Piwnica-Worms '79**

St. Louis, Missouri | Professor, Research Scientist  
Washington University School of Medicine

**H**ELEN PIWNICA-WORMS'S RESEARCH HAS REVOLUTIONIZED the tenets of molecular biology for advancing cancer treatment and established her as a top cancer cell cycle researcher. Her many contributions at higher educational institutions cement her status as an innovative cancer researcher and a superb teacher.

Piwnica-Worms earned her Ph.D. at Duke University in 1984. While completing her postdoctoral fellowship at the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, her discoveries on how certain mutations cause cancers led to her position as an assistant professor of physiology at Tufts University Medical School. During her time at Tufts, Piwnica-Worms uncovered crucial mechanisms of cell cycle regulation, prompting Harvard Medical School to recruit her in 1992.

Following her time at Harvard Medical School and the Beth Israel Hospital, Piwnica-Worms joined the Washington University School of Medicine faculty in 1994 as an associate and then full professor in the Department of Cell Biology and Physiology. She has played an instrumental role in building

the Molecular Oncology Program at Washington University, which promotes basic-to-clinical translational studies in cancer research and provides training for graduate students, M.D./Ph.D. students, physician scientists, and postdoctoral research fellows.

In 1996, Piwnica-Worms began her efforts at Washington University to establish the Alvin J. Siteman Cancer Center, a research center now considered one of the country's foremost comprehensive cancer centers. She works tirelessly on behalf of the center where she is now associate director of Basic Science. She leads the Siteman Cell Proliferation Program. She also is a member of the Siteman Cancer Center Executive Committee and the Cancer Biology Pathway Selection Committee.

Piwnica-Worms was a Damon Runyon Fellow and Pew Scholar of the Biomedical Sciences and earned the American Cancer Society Junior Faculty Research Award and the American Heart Established Investigator Award. In 1994, she became an associate of the Howard Hughes Medical Institute and in 1998 was named a full investigator. In 2001 she received the Spirit of Health Award for cancer research from the American Cancer Society and was elected a fellow of the Academy of Science of St. Louis. She is an elected fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and the American Association for the Advancement of Science. She recently completed a three-year term on the board of directors of the American Association for Cancer Research.

Her work has the potential to improve the lives of cancer patients, and her mentorship of young and future scientists has set her apart as an exemplary professional. Piwnica-Worms is truly among the elite investigating the biochemical and cell biological complexities of cancer cell research.



## ALUMNI ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

**Charles W. Bates '52**

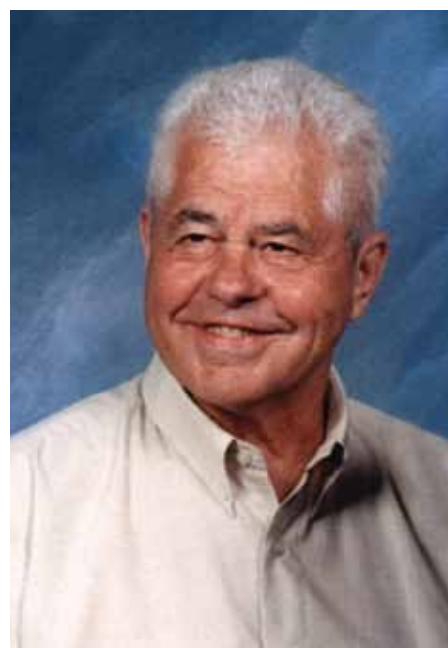
Waconia, Minnesota | Retired Commissioner of Social Services  
Westchester County, New York

**C**HARLES W. BATES HAS A LONG AND DISTINGUISHED CAREER as a social worker in both the private and public sectors. After graduating from high school in his native Willmar, Minnesota, Bates enlisted in the U.S. Army and served in Korea. This overseas military service brought him a keen awareness of cultural and racial differences. After returning to the states, he used the opportunity and resources provided by the G.I. Bill to enroll at St. Olaf College.

A hitchhiking trip to New York City's Harlem neighborhood the summer after his junior year at St. Olaf deepened his interest in service. Housed in a settlement facility, Bates worked with African American children in a day camp operated by the Red Shield, a branch of the Salvation Army. These weeks spent in the inner city helped define his vocation. Interest in child welfare led Bates to a position in Baudette, Minnesota, near the Canadian border. Close daily contact with the young and elderly in Baudette shaped the caring style he would later use at large private agencies as well as state welfare departments.

After earning his master's degree in social work at Louisiana State University, Bates returned to Minnesota and spent the next four years as a child welfare consultant and field representative before being named director of case work for a private children's home in Cincinnati. In 1964, he became executive director of Milwaukee Child Care Centers, where he excelled at bringing together small day-care providers into a more efficient organization and greatly expanded the center's programs.

The Child Welfare League of America recognized his creativity and talents, which led to a move to New England and a new position as executive director for Boston Children's Service, one of the oldest and most prestigious voluntary child welfare agencies in the nation. In 1972, Bates accepted a position as director of the Ohio Department of Public Welfare



and was one of only two or three people in the country who headed a state welfare department having a graduate degree in social work.

His work in Ohio prepared Bates for his next position as commissioner of social services in the County of Westchester (just north of New York City). There he encouraged his employees to enroll in graduate coursework, a program that many other counties in New York State began to imitate. By 1985, nearly 300 county employ-

ees had participated in the program through Pace University and earned a Master of Public Administration degree, Commissioner Charles W. Bates among them.

In retirement, Bates moved back to Minnesota and found time to teach evening classes at Winona State University as well as serve on both the local Lutheran Social Service Board and the Zumbro Lutheran Church Council in Rochester. Throughout his life he has held fast to the conviction that "I am my brother's keeper."

**ALUMNI ACHIEVEMENT AWARD**

**Robert M. Fossum '59**

Champaign, Illinois | Professor Emeritus of Mathematics  
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

ROBERT FOSSUM HAS EXEMPLIFIED THE BENEFITS of a liberal arts education throughout his academic career, contributing not only to his field of algebra but also to interdisciplinary areas of the natural sciences. His most recent collaborative research resulted in new algorithms for real-time face recognition in a new area of mathematical research associated with computer vision and face recognition. Fossum's expertise in algebra and algebraic geometry helped solve some of the most challenging engineering problems and has allowed him to make contributions far beyond pure mathematics.

Fossum, who was raised in Northfield, majored in mathematics and physics. With his father managing the St. Olaf Bookstore, his mother



teaching mathematics in Farmington, and many family friends who were members of the St. Olaf faculty, the college campus was his second home. "I spent a lot of time on weekends and in the summer exploring the [St. Olaf] library," says Fossum. "I believe I read every book in the children's section."

Fossum earned his M.A. and Ph.D. in mathematics at the University of Michigan and began his career as a mathematician in 1964

when, prior to completing his Ph.D. thesis, he was hired as an instructor in the Department of Mathematics at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He became a full professor in 1972.

In 1968, Fossum was awarded a Fulbright Fellowship at the University of Oslo. His international work has informed his research, teaching, and mentoring of graduate students at the University of Illinois. Fossum's contributions to the field of mathematics led to his election to the sciences section of the Royal Norwegian Academy of Sciences and Letters and the Center for Advanced Study at the University of Illinois and becoming a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. He also served from 1989 to 1999 as secretary of the American Mathematical Society, an organization devoted to advancing mathematical research, and oversaw its expansion into an international organization of more than 30,000 members.

Outside of his mathematical endeavors, Fossum has served as chair of the University Faculty Senate, chair of the University of Illinois Charitable Fund Drive, sat on the board of directors for Planned Parenthood of East Central Illinois, and served as treasurer of the Spurlock Museum Guild.

He is currently president of Trønderlag of America, an organization of immigrants and their descendants from the Trønderlag region of Norway, and has retired to Chetek, Wisconsin, with his wife Robin. They have four children: Karen '86, Kristin Fossum Griffith '89, Jonathan, and Erik.

**DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD**

**Rev. Charles D. Anderson '56**

**Shirley Wilson Anderson '56**

Red Wing, Minnesota | Retired Pastor and Bishop; Retired Nurse

CHARLES AND SHIRLEY WILSON ANDERSON, who met at St. Olaf on a blind date fifty-eight years ago, show their deep commitment to the college with Grandparent Ministry, a scholarship fund that frequently brings them back to the Hill. With fifty-three "adopted St. Olaf grandkids" on campus during the 2009-10 academic year and an estimated 400 to 500 Ole grandkids adopted since their scholarship fund began, Chuck and Shirley are busy "grandparents."

They began their Grandparent Ministry after their three children graduated in the 1980s, explaining, "The main goal of the scholarship was to give back all the direct and indirect aid our family received while at St. Olaf. Education-wise, it's hard for us to imagine anything better than St. Olaf."

Their goal — to have the Charles and Shirley Anderson Endowed Scholarship reach \$75,000 by their 75th birthdays — was accomplished, and the scholarship's current value is more than \$100,000. A recent decision to deed a major portion of their lake property to St. Olaf College will increase the size of their scholarship threefold and serve even more students who have financial need.

While the Andersons have contributed so much to St. Olaf College, their gifts as adoptive grandparents have been among the most unique the college has ever seen. This commitment includes making the thirty-eight-mile trip to Northfield to support students in events big and small, from speaking in chapel or performing in a concert to meeting the new boyfriend or having lunch in the Kings Room. This past July, the Andersons even went to Norway to attend the wedding of two of their Ole grandchildren.

"Connecting with past, present, and future St. Olaf students is the main engine driving our hope for the future," they say. In 2006, they also reached out to former classmates through their volunteer work, helping to make their 50th class reunion a success. They are also active at Holden Village, Gustavus Adolphus College, and Luther Seminary. The Andersons have represented Holden Village on many college campuses and given presentations about its ministry for numerous congregations. Both have extensively served the ELCA, especially the Southwestern Minnesota and Saint Paul area synods.

The Andersons are steadfast in their enthusiasm and willingness to help society, their community, and the alma mater they love so dearly. 🐾



St. Olaf grants three distinct awards each year. For information and nomination forms, visit [stolaf.edu/alumni/awards](http://stolaf.edu/alumni/awards) or call 888-865-6537.