

Six outstanding alumni have made their marks across the United States and around the globe, shining a light on what a St. Olaf education in action can do.

# Lives of Worth and Service

By **Suzy Frisch** | Just as a diverse group of farmers, pastors, and businessmen founded St. Olaf College 135 years ago, the college is honoring a richly varied group of alumni for their lifelong achievements and professional contributions. This year, St. Olaf starts a new tradition of acclaiming its distinguished alumni on Founders' Day, November 6, 2009, extolling these six graduates as an integral part of college history and a testament to its tradition of excellence.

## DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARD

### Robert N. Munson '64

Maple Grove, Minnesota | Retired director of emergency services for the American Red Cross, Minneapolis Area Chapter of Agriculture

PHOTOGRAPHED BY TOM ROSTER

St. Olaf College attracted Robert Munson with its emphasis on Christian service, and his intention to apply these lessons professionally propelled Munson through four decades of helping others. His career culminated in directing emergency services for the Minneapolis chapter of the American Red Cross, and in retirement Munson continues a busy regimen of service to people and community.

The division that Munson headed for sixteen years provides 24/7 responses to local emergencies such as fires and storms, crises affecting military families, and services to international families separated by war and disaster. He led a staff of ten professionals and more than 300 volunteers, ultimately earning the Tiffany Award for employee excellence, the Red Cross's highest honor bestowed at the local level.

**“We learned about service to others and servant leadership in our religion classes at St. Olaf. I think it’s one of the reasons I went into social work — to be as helpful as possible to our fellow human beings — and why I continue to volunteer today.”**

In 1993 Munson became an international services instructor for the National Red Cross, creating an award-winning training module and teaching others about international humanitarian law and the Geneva Conventions. He traveled to Honduras for training to join its International Disaster Response Team, later applying that education domestically after September 11.



Munson spent nearly two months helping international families whose relatives died in the attack and coordinating memorial services in New York and Washington, D.C.

After graduating from St. Olaf, Munson served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Venezuela and then earned a master's degree in social work. He combined his love for Christian service with helping others during his twenty-year tenure at Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota, where he encouraged volunteerism and community activism statewide. Munson also completed a six-year term as vice chair on the ELCA Board of Global Missions overseeing international missionary work.

Munson remains closely connected to St. Olaf College, serving as a member of his class reunion committee, a class fund agent,

and a class correspondent. He has guest lectured in the Department of Social Work, and he also has guided many social work students through internship placements.

Retired since 2006, Munson is an active volunteer. In this capacity he is a member of the Red Cross Disaster Mental Health team, a curriculum consultant, an instructor-trainer in international humanitarian law, and a disaster funding advisor for Thrivent Financial Services. He also volunteers for the Maple Grove Arts Council and Historical Preservation Society, and provides cardiac patient support at North Memorial Hospital. His church recently commissioned him as a Care Minister to help the pastoral staff counsel congregants in need of support. Munson also finds time to work on his Norwegian rosemaaling painting. 🌹

DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARD

## Richard Rortvedt '69

Arlington, Virginia | International agricultural cooperation and development official, U.S. Department of Agriculture

PHOTOGRAPHED DURING HIS PILGRIMAGE WALK TO SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA IN SPAIN

During a thirty-two-year career working for the federal government, Richard Rortvedt pursued his lifelong goals to generate international good will and help feed the world. He served as an agricultural diplomat for the United States, helping other countries develop their agricultural potential while still benefiting American farmers and consumers.

Rortvedt started his national service with active duty in the U.S. Air Force five days after graduating from St. Olaf. Then he earned a master's degree in Latin American studies from the University of New Mexico, aiming to pursue a career in food and agriculture. He moved to Washington, D.C., and landed a job with the U.S. Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service, where he specialized in Latin America.

Over the years, Rortvedt held ten different civilian jobs in the USDA and visited twenty-eight countries on official business. His career included leadership positions in the Office of International Cooperation and Development, where he worked on agricultural modernization and the Food for Peace program. He was director of global bilateral scientific exchanges, headed a trade and investment program, and served as the USDA's liaison to the Inter-American Development Bank. When Rortvedt retired, he was special assistant to the Foreign Agricultural Service's deputy administrator, providing support and advice on agricultural trade and development programs.

“My broad St. Olaf education helped prepare me to serve: in my career as a bridge between technical experts and policymakers, between developing and developed nations, and between cultures; in my volunteer work, I often help build bridges between hosts and guests, where those who provide hospitality are frequently blessed by becoming guests themselves.”

During Rortvedt's career he earned many honors, including the USDA's Superior Service Award for innovative, effective leadership in the Cancun Presidential Agricultural Task Forces and Caribbean Basin Initiative. He also received the Foreign Agricultural Service Administrator's Award for helping negotiate successful free-trade agreements that opened markets for U.S. agricultural products.

As a retiree, Rortvedt channels his passion for service into widespread volunteer work. He represents Costa Rica's Center for Tropical Agricultural Research and Higher Education (CATIE) in Washington and served for two years as its board president.

Rortvedt works devotedly toward social justice through ministries to homeless women at Luther Place Memorial Church in Washington and on the boards of the Lutheran Volunteer Corps and Steinbruck Center for Urban Studies.

Still today Rortvedt values his liberal arts education from St. Olaf, as well as its focus on ethical and moral behavior and service to church, society, and the global community. He chaired the gift committee for his fortieth reunion while also supporting the St. Olaf Music Department and Center for Experiential Learning, as well as the Washington, D.C.-area alumni club. 🦋





## ALUMNI ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

**Ronald Caple '60**

Duluth, Minnesota | Professor Emeritus of Chemistry, University of Minnesota-Duluth

PHOTOGRAPHED AT LAKE SUPERIOR  
BY BRETT GROEHLER, UMD

Ronald Caple was profoundly affected when one of his first students at University of Minnesota-Duluth (UMD) was killed in action during the Vietnam War. It shook up his view of the world and inspired him to dedicate his career to promoting human understanding and preventing future conflicts.

Collaborating early and often with scientists in Russia, China, Cuba, and Vietnam, Caple made concerted efforts to create peace through scientific cooperation. He essentially set up a one-man exchange program with Russia, visiting the country nineteen times to conduct research, lecture, and establish con-

**“The commencement speaker at my graduation talked about how important it is for Oles to get out in the world and promote understanding. Bingo! He’s describing this Ole right on the head. I developed this awareness of other cultures and what’s going on in the world while at St. Olaf.”**

tacts. Independently, he kept the channels of communication, exchange and collaboration open with Soviet chemists during the Cold War.

A specialist in synthetic organic chemistry, Caple has been much lauded for his research, teaching, and dedication to pharmacy students at the University of Minnesota. He has published nearly 100 articles and the book *Organic Synthesis: The Science Behind the Art*. He also participated actively in the Council on Undergraduate Research for many years, including serving as chairperson.

To promote international cooperation another way, Caple helped establish a “sister city” connection between Duluth and Petrozavodsk, Russia, and an informal connection with Pinar del Rio, Cuba. Both relationships developed fertile exchanges of ideas and visitors. In 2005, Caple earned the U.S. Civilian Research and Development Fund award for his efforts to foster international cooperation in science, joining alumni recipients Al Gore

and George Soros. Caple also earned the Science Competition Prize from the Soviet Academy of Sciences in 1978, several honorary degrees from prestigious Russian universities and is Doctor Honoris Causa of the Russian Academy of Sciences.

In 1965, as a newly minted Ph.D. and professor, Caple took on the unwanted position of advising pre-pharmacy majors at UMD. Though he has been retired for four years, he still mentors these students as a volunteer. For these efforts — which has resulted in Caple advising 10 percent of the practicing pharmacists in Minnesota — he received the University of Minnesota College of Pharmacy Award, the first time this honor was given to someone outside the college and off the Twin Cities campus. Caple also received several awards for undergraduate teaching.

Caple recently created the Ronnie Lindstrom International Scholarship Fund to honor his former student who died in Vietnam. He aims to help youth from developing nations pursue their undergraduate degrees at UMD, hoping that they use their new skills and education to benefit their native countries while also fostering international understanding. 🍷

ALUMNI ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

**Jean Leppen Kinsey '63**

Roseville, Minnesota | Professor of Applied Economics and Director of the Food Industry Center, University of Minnesota

PHOTOGRAPHED BY STEVE WOIT

Jean Leppen Kinsey plays an influential role at the intersection of consumer economics, agriculture, and public policy. As a professor

of applied economics at the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities, a researcher, and a leader in her field, Kinsey uses economic theory to evaluate how public policy affects consumers in many areas, from food safety and debt to consumer well being.

After graduating from St. Olaf and teaching high school, Kinsey earned a Ph.D. in agricultural economics from the University of California-Davis. She joined the faculty of the University of Minnesota in 1977 and soon

became a powerful voice for consumers, helping industry understand consumers' decision-making regarding housing, credit, and food-buying. In 1995, Kinsey helped bring the Food Industry Center, a part of the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, to the university and was named its director, a position she still holds. The multidisciplinary center integrates diverse academic research and applies it to issues affecting the entire food industry.

During her career, Kinsey has secured more than \$8 million in research grants and written widely on a swath of topics including credit card use, food consumption patterns, consumer confidence and buying behavior, food safety, and the role of food and nutrition in consumer health. Kinsey's work has received many awards and shaped the thinking of her profession; simultaneously, she has influenced future economists by advising 200 undergraduates and nearly 100 master's degree and Ph.D. candidates.

**“My time at St. Olaf defined who I am, the way I think about the world, and the importance of interactions between people. I know that my ability to think critically and evaluate and appreciate other cultures started at St. Olaf.”**

At a time when applied economics had few women in leadership positions, Kinsey received a prestigious fellowship from the National Center for Food and Agricultural Policy in Washington, D.C. in 1986. In 2000 she was named a fellow of the American Agricultural Economics Association and served as its president in 2002. She is also a fellow of the American Council on Consumer Interests. Providing a voice for consumers and influencing U.S. monetary policy, Kinsey served as a director of the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis from 1991 to 1997. For two years she chaired the board — the first woman to fill that role.

Kinsey offers her expertise to government agencies and nonprofits, serving as a consultant to the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Agency for International Development, and on the board of the International Food Policy Research Institute, a nonprofit working to reduce global hunger. She has consulted on projects in Rwanda, Barbados, and Senegal involving women in development and food storage. 🦋





**DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD**  
**Norman L. Cadman '49**

Claremont, California | Medical doctor

PHOTOGRAPHED IN JAISALMER, RAJASTAN,  
 AFTER SERVING AT PATAN HOSPITAL IN NEPAL

In 2000, Norman Cadman completed a rewarding thirty-two-year career as a physician, one in which he helped establish the Cancer Care Center at Pomona Valley Hospital Medical Center and served as president of the medical staff. But he harbored no plans to rest. Combining a love for seeing the world, practicing medicine, and helping others, Cadman has spent the past thirteen years as a volunteer doctor in underdeveloped countries.

Cadman has traveled to Eritrea, Kenya, Nepal, Madagascar, Peru, and Uganda to help train local doctors in surgical pathology, paying his own way and staying for a few weeks or months a time. He makes an annual trip abroad on behalf of Pathologists Overseas,

often acting as the local hospital's only pathologist or helping set up pathology labs. While Cadman says he volunteers his expertise for selfish reasons — “because it feels good” — he is pleased if his work abroad helps others, too.

While at Pomona Valley, Cadman was highly regarded by his fellow physicians as a doctor with outstanding ethics, keen knowledge about his specialty, and high standards of excellence. He held many leadership positions, including chair of the hospital foundation board and the Department of Pathology, as well as head of committees for credentials and quality assurance, among others.

Cadman always travels with his wife of fifty-seven years, Eloise, and they often extend their trips by exploring other nearby countries. Together they have visited more than sixty nations. As a southern Minnesota farm boy, Cadman was fascinated by other cultures, but he really caught the travel bug while stationed in Japan for the U.S. Air Force Medical Corps. After completing his residency at the Mayo Clinic, Cadman began his

“Being at St. Olaf for my sixtieth reunion, I hated to leave Northfield. I really had a sense of gratitude for having gone to St. Olaf and great feelings of warmth. I got a great scientific education there.”

medical career in California. He specializes in surgical pathology, particularly the development of screening and detection regimens for cervical cancer.

An active volunteer in other arenas, Cadman teaches children, seniors, and others about opera, and then accompanies them on field trips to the Los Angeles Opera. He also has worked as a docent for the George Page Museum of La Brea Discoveries and the Huntington Library. In addition, Cadman participates in a Simple Gifts program, sitting with hospice patients to give their loved ones a break. The Cadmans are also involved in a group that helps newly arrived foreign students get settled in the United States. 🦋

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD

## Glenn W. Jeffrey '71

Medina, Minnesota | Founder and Chair,  
Life Coaches for Kids®

PHOTOGRAPHED BY BRUCE JEFFREY

A human resources executive for twenty-five years, Glenn Jeffrey decided to retire early and redirect his leadership skills to the nonprofit sector. Convinced that father

absence is an insidious social problem, he founded Life Coaches for Kids® to heal hurting children. For the past ten years, his faith-based ministry has helped more than 1,000 youth in five states and two continents.

The organization guides communities of faith to develop mentoring programs as part of their existing youth ministries and outreach. Working without pay, Jeffrey built Life Coaches from the ground up, finding and nurturing partnerships with churches, youth

ministries, and others. Jeffrey helped them develop lay leaders who could, in turn, mobilize their members to serve as mentors. He also cultivated sources of funding and other partnerships by tapping into connections made during his years in corporate America.

Through consistent one-on-one mentoring over at least a year, adults help children from broken homes build life skills, confidence, and character while also showing them faith in action. Jeffrey believes that these friendships with a caring, Christian adult can heal and transform troubled kids while also breaking the cycle of father abandonment.

A native of Canada, Jeffrey learned first-hand how to successfully combine faith, work, and family in one undertaking from his parents, who ran a Christian camp for children. He began a quest for education and spiritual answers at Wheaton College in Illinois, took a three-year break from school to work and teach high school in the Bahamas, and completed his undergraduate degree in social psychology at St. Olaf.

**“I learned at St. Olaf and seminary that life is about stewardship, investing your life, resources, and gifts in a way that adds value and makes a difference for the kingdom of God.”**

As he did as an undergraduate, Jeffrey worked full-time while earning a master's degree in theology from Bethel Theological Seminary. He got on-the-job training in human resources at Nordic Ware and decided he enjoyed the field, eventually logging stints at Green Giant, Gelco, Burger King, Pillsbury, and Ceridian. Jeffrey ended his career as president of Ceridian Performance Partners, which provided companies with employee assistance programs and work-life performance resources.

Jeffrey shares his expertise with many organizations, serving as chair of the National Youth Leadership Council and board member of Relate Counseling Center, Quest International, Great Dads, Urban Ventures Center for Fathering, and Marriage Savers. Shortly after leaving the corporate world, Jeffrey was chosen to shepherd the participation of faith communities in the Summit for America's Future (now called America's Promise), the conference led by Colin Powell. 🦁

**SUZY FRISCH** is a Minneapolis-based freelance writer and frequent contributor to *St. Olaf Magazine*.

