

SPRING 2024

ST. OLAF

M A G A Z I N E



ON THE COVER

Wendy Helgemo '91, Louise Matson '89, and Mary LaGarde '91, photographed by Jaida Grey Eagle at the Minneapolis American Indian Center, which recently reopened after an extensive renovation. Read more about how these women are making a difference as part of the modern Native American awakening on page 4.

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Following a third consecutive national championship for the women's Nordic skiing team, President Susan Rundell Singer hosted members of both the women's Nordic and alpine skiing teams at the St. Olaf House this spring.

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C O N T R I B U T O R S



Jaida Grey Eagle is an Oglala Lakota freelance documentary photographer based in St. Paul whose work has been featured in the *New York Times Magazine*, the *Washington Post*, ProPublica, The Urban Institute, *The Wall Street Journal*, and Netflix. She served as the co-curator of the recent Minneapolis Institute of Arts exhibit "In Our Hands: Native Photography From 1890 to Now," and she is a co-producer on the award-winning *Sisters Rising* documentary. Learn more about her work at jaidagreyeagle.com.

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Fenton Krupp '24 majored in computer science at St. Olaf, where he also worked as a staff writer for the Marketing and Communications Office. After graduation he is heading to Sarasota, Florida to join Marriott International as an IT manager. He is a lover of words, a very mediocre rock climber, and the first student to serve three terms as the student observer to the St. Olaf Board of Regents.

Kate Nelson is an Alaska Native Tlingit tribal member and an award-winning journalist based in Minneapolis who focuses on amplifying important Indigenous changemakers and issues. Her writing has appeared in top publications including *ELLE*, *Esquire*, *Vanity Fair*, *Teen Vogue*, the BBC, *The Guardian*, *Architectural Digest*, *Condé Nast Traveler*, and more. A lifelong storyteller, Kate is also an avid equestrian and a pop culture aficionado.





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FROM THE DESK OF
PRESIDENT SUSAN RUNDELL SINGER



Dear Oles,

Spring has arrived on the Hill, and our vibrant St. Olaf community is flowing out onto the campus green — hammocks and all. The strength of our community is both a joy and an opportunity to belong. It's important that we extend that sense of belonging to everyone at St. Olaf, including alumni who will always be part of our college.

This spring we have been reimagining how to infuse, across St. Olaf, our commitment to being an inclusive, equitable campus where everyone experiences a sense of belonging. This responsibility belongs to all of us, and leadership sets the tone. We are in the midst of a search for a Vice President for Community and Belonging, which will replace the current role of Interim Vice President for Equity and Inclusion. Shifting the title and focus of this role signals our bold aspirations to embrace the continual, systemic work ahead. Our new vice president's team will include our TRIO college preparation and access programs (Educational Talent Search and Upward Bound); the Glenn and Myretta Taylor Center for Equity and Inclusion; our Posse Foundation cohort; Title IX/Section 504; and Bias Reporting. To create a net of inclusion across all groups, we are also reconfiguring position responsibilities to build a team of advisors for our new vice president who are rooted within their own divisions. A strong team will allow us to extend our current strategic planning to build a robust strategy for community and belonging in the 2024–25 academic year.

Our commitment to truth-telling, healing, and moving forward is in words and action. We are beginning the work of transforming our land acknowledgment statement into meaningful action. Faculty, staff, students, and alumni are serving on two working groups that are focused on honest storytelling about the history of stewarding local land and exploring acts of healing. We are grateful for the candor, expertise, and forward mindset of many, including three of our alumnae — Wendy Helgemo '91, Mary LaGarde '91, and Louise Matson '89 — who are lighting the way in this crucial endeavor. We're also grateful for the knowledge that Oglala Lakota chef Sean Sherman shared as he visited campus this spring as part of the Institute for Freedom and Community's speaker series. Sean used his work on Indigenous food pathways to challenge our community to learn and consider the long history of harm to Indigenous people in our region and across the nation. Before he spoke he was introduced by his sister, Kelly Sherman-Conroy, whose work as a faculty member in our Religion Department infuses contemporary Lutheran thought with Indigenous perspectives and lifts up our commitment to being rooted and open.

This summer marks the 60th anniversary of the Civil Rights Act, a meaningful moment to create permanent space for a barbershop on campus. Building on the hard work and vision of Aidan Lloyd '24 and Giovanni Green '23, The Shop 1500 will open in Buntrock Commons this fall. Like many of the barbershops that have played a key role in creating community over the decades, The Shop 1500 will provide space for gathering and conversation in addition to haircuts and styling for all students, especially meeting the needs of Oles with Black or textured hair.

Embracing diversity of thought has never been more important. As we head into the 2024 elections, efforts are underway across campus to reinforce our deeply held value of engaging each other in meaningful ways across differences. Minnesota Public Radio recently featured the college's nonpartisan election engagement project, which encourages all Oles to vote — and has led St. Olaf to have one of the highest student voting rates in the country. Our Institute for Freedom and Community, under the leadership of Professor of Political Science Chris Chapp, is also doing important work to support our shared efforts to engage each other in difficult conversations, including a visit this spring with Mónica Guzmán, the author of *I Never Thought of It That Way: How to Have Fearlessly Curious Conversations in Dangerously Divided Times*. She also led interactive workshops for students, faculty, and staff on how to have more open political conversations.

In addition to all of this work, this spring we celebrated the 10th anniversary of the Ole Cup student entrepreneurial competition. The special celebration on campus included a keynote speech by Michelle Magat Williams '92, who founded a global communications firm, as well as many wonderful visits with Ole entrepreneurs. It was a joy to see how our students and alumni are using the power of a liberal arts education to develop innovative solutions and products.

At the heart of all our work is celebrating and advancing our community. St. Olaf belongs to all of us.

Fram! Fram!

Susan Rundell Singer



UMI YAH! YAH!

The St. Olaf men's soccer team hoists the national championship trophy after its 2-1 overtime victory over Amherst.



National Champions!

THE ST. OLAF MEN'S SOCCER TEAM won its first NCAA Division III national title with a 2-1 come-from-behind overtime victory over No. 13-ranked Amherst College on December 3.

After entering the NCAA Tournament ranked No. 11, St. Olaf (20-3-3) won six straight games, including four against nationally ranked teams, to win the championship and ascend to No. 1 in the year-end United Soccer Coaches ranking.

The championship game win was St. Olaf's program-record 20th of the season — breaking a tie with the 2021 team — and extended the program's record-long unbeaten streak to 22 games. The national title was the first by a Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (MIAC) institution in men's soccer and made St. Olaf the western-most program to win the national title in men's soccer in 20 years.

Casey McCloskey '24 was honored as the tournament's Most Outstanding Offensive Player, while goalkeeper Peter Forseth '25 was picked as the Most Outstanding Defensive Player. The duo were joined on the All-Tournament Team by Hakeem Morgan '24 and Victor Gaulmin '24. Led by head coach Justin Oliver, the team's coaching staff was honored as the United Soccer Coaches 2023 NCAA Division III Men's Soccer National Coaching Staff of the Year. 🏆

PHOTOGRAPHED BY HANNAH ROBB



Hakeem Morgan '24 celebrates his goal that tied the game at 1-1 in the 62nd minute.

Shea Bechtel '25 holds the trophy as the team celebrates its big victory.

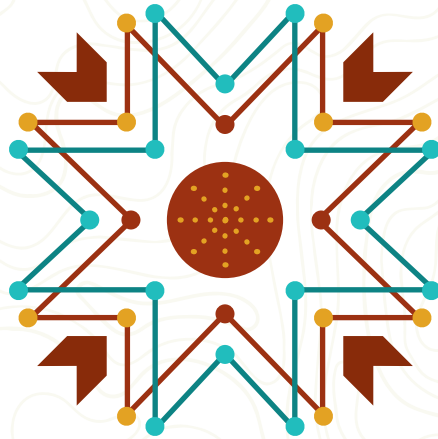


The Oles pose for a team photo with the championship trophy after winning their first-ever national title.



WENDY HELGEMO '91, MARY LAGARDE '91,
AND LOUISE MATSON '89 ARE MAKING
A DIFFERENCE AS PART OF THE MODERN
NATIVE AMERICAN AWAKENING.

INDIGENOUS ADVOCATES



EMPOWERING TRIBAL COMMUNITIES

BY KATE NELSON

PHOTOGRAPHED BY JAIDA GREY EAGLE



Wendy Helgemo '91, Louise Matson '89, and Mary LaGarde '91,
photographed at the Minneapolis American Indian Center.

It's not unusual for Oles to stay in touch long after their college days, but the recurring get-togethers of one group of alumnae are a gathering of a different caliber: power lunch sessions between three Native American powerhouse women.

Wendy Helgemo '91 (Ho-Chunk), Mary LaGarde '91 (White Earth), and Louise Matson '89 (White Earth) have all dedicated their lives to empowering Indigenous peoples at the local, state, and national levels.

Helgemo, who received the St. Olaf Distinguished Alumni Award in 2018, has spent three decades working in Native policy across public, nonprofit, and tribal sectors. That includes serving as legal counsel for multiple Midwest tribes, the director of governmental affairs for the National American Indian Housing Council, the inaugural director of the George Washington University's AT&T Center for Indigenous Politics and Policy, and more. After a long tenure in Washington, D.C., she recently returned to her home state, where she's now the tribal liaison for the Minnesota Department of Management and Budget. In this role, Helgemo strengthens relationships with tribal nations and ensures Indigenous interests are front of mind when it comes to financial investments across state agencies.

LaGarde has helmed the Minneapolis American Indian Center as its executive director since 2013. One of the nation's first urban Native community centers, the iconic institution situated in the Franklin Avenue East Cultural District just reopened after a \$32.5 million renovation that provided much-needed updates to the original 1974 facility. LaGarde first got involved with the center in 2009 as a grant writer; before that, she was working in early childhood development, including helping open learning centers serving Little Earth of United Tribes, the country's only Native-preference Section 8 community-based housing in Minneapolis.

Matson, who received the St. Olaf Alumni Achievement Award in 2022, is celebrating 22 years with the Division of Indian Work, 10 of those as its executive director. For more than seven decades, the Minneapolis-based nonprofit has supported and served the urban Native population through culturally relevant education, traditional healing, and leadership development. She is also a founding board member of the Ojibwe/Dakota immersion Bdote Learning Center, vice chair of the Metropolitan Urban Indian Directors Group, and chair of Phillips Indian Educators, based in the multicultural Minneapolis neighborhood of the same name.

Taken altogether, their impressive achievements are part of an awe-inspiring Indigenous awakening, with

unprecedented female Native representation in key leadership roles. That includes Deb Haaland's (Pueblo of Laguna) historic appointment as U.S. Interior Secretary and Minnesota Lieutenant Governor Peggy Flanagan's (White Earth) position as the country's highest-ranking Native woman elected to executive office. And yet Helgemo, LaGarde, and Matson's ceaseless efforts remain as crucial as ever, given that Indigenous peoples face marked inequities in the aftermath of colonialism, including ongoing discrimination, outsized violence, health disparities, lower life expectancies, and high levels of poverty, addiction, and suicide.

As some of St. Olaf's only Native students during their time on the Hill, Helgemo and LaGarde became close in college; Helgemo also briefly met Matson (who she dubbed "the cool upperclassman") at school. LaGarde and Matson got to know each other later in life through their complementary careers. After Helgemo reached out in recent years to rekindle those relationships before moving back to Minnesota, the influential trio began meeting regularly for those power lunches. Their conversations range from personal to professional, with lots of laughter, support, and mutual admiration. They recently reflected on their individual — and intertwining — journeys that led to their important work.

EARLY INFLUENCES

While it might seem like they were destined to make an impact on Indigenous communities, these three women arrived at this point in their careers via differing paths. Helgemo and LaGarde were inspired to carry on the strong advocacy traditions they observed in their inner circles early on. Matson, on the other hand, was driven by a desire to engage with the thriving Twin Cities Native community and to better connect with her White Earth heritage — an all-too-common phenomenon among Indigenous individuals who have experienced disconnection from their ancestral lifeways.

Matson grew up in South Minneapolis and spent many summers up on Lake of the Woods with her paternal grandmother, who would sign Matson and her cousins up for so-called "Indian summer school" in nearby Warroad. Although her grandma was born on the White Earth Nation in northwestern Minnesota — the state's largest Indian reservation both in terms of enrollment and geographic area, at about 1,300 square miles — Matson's dad never lived there and her mom is non-Native, so she grew up as "more of just an urban kid," as she puts it.

Her feelings of distance from her tribe's traditions were no doubt in large part due to her grandmother's time spent at an Indian boarding school, which aimed to strip Native youth of their cultural knowledge through forced assimilation.



“Most of my grandma’s family attended boarding schools except for one person that they hid,” Matson says. “She never talked about it, but that experience definitely impacted her and impacted my dad and in turn impacted me. My dad was raised Catholic, so I probably know more Ojibwe language than he does. Which isn’t how it should be, but that’s a good example of the trauma his generation endured that tore families apart.”

She was inspired by the strong Indigenous women she saw making a difference. “There were a lot of people I admired in the community,” Matson says. “Women like [local organizer, journalist, and cofounder of Native youth nonprofit MIGIZI] Laura Waterman Wittstock, [former MIGIZI president] Elaine Salinas, and Wendy’s mom, Marlene, were huge forces.”

Helgemo was deeply involved with the Native community throughout her upbringing in the western Twin Cities suburb of Plymouth. She recalls working as a Division of Indian Work camp counselor, attending powwows at the Minneapolis American Indian Center, and becoming one of the Indian Health Board’s original Soaring Eagles.

“My family has a legacy of public service, in particular working for Native people,” she says. “My grandfather, Murray Whiterabbit, was a World War II veteran who then worked at the Bureau of Indian Affairs in Ashland, Wisconsin, ensuring people had the resources to go to school if they chose to. And my mom, Marlene Whiterabbit Helgemo, was the director for the Minnesota Sioux Tribes Housing Authority, as it was called at the time, working on land and housing issues with the state’s four Dakota bands.” Her late mom was also the first female Native pastor ordained in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and a cofounder of the National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition.

“So I grew up tagging along with my mom to those four tribes’ reservations and learning about them, plus we kept ties with our Ho-Chunk relatives and friends all over Wisconsin,” Helgemo remembers. “My family was also very close with Mary Ellen Dumas, who ran the Division of Indian Work, which is why it’s so special to see that come full circle with Louise now leading that organization.”

While in college, Helgemo became passionate about practicing Indian law, which led her to pursue a law degree at the University of Colorado after graduating from St. Olaf. “At St. Olaf, Mary and I were actually in an Indian history class together,” she says. “That was very eye-opening as to all the laws that had been passed over two centuries with the goal of dispossessing Native people of their land, culture, language, and resources. It really prompted my interest in policy.”

LaGarde, meanwhile, witnessed family members’ strong advocacy examples during her childhood spent


**HELGEMO, LAGARDE, AND
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VIOLENCE, HEALTH DISPARITIES,
LOWER LIFE EXPECTANCIES,
AND HIGH LEVELS OF POVERTY,
ADDICTION, AND SUICIDE.**

in both Minneapolis and the Iron Range town of Eveleth, Minnesota. Many of them were involved in the American Indian Movement, a grassroots civil rights group that got its start in Minneapolis in 1968 to challenge systemic issues such as poverty, discrimination, and police brutality. That blossomed into an international movement aimed at upholding tribal sovereignty.


Observing that activism first-hand left an impression on LaGarde. “I grew up in the ’70s and was exposed to all the social movements going on,” she recalls. “The American Indian Movement was such a strong force back then, as it still is today. Being part of that really connected me to my cultural identity as a Native person.”

Coming from that strong cultural background, LaGarde was a bit shell-shocked by the lack of diversity at St. Olaf, especially in the late ’80s and early ’90s. “While researching colleges, I was really looking at the academic reputation,” she notes. “It never dawned on me to also look at the diversity of the student body and staff. So when I got there, it was really quite surprising not seeing a lot of brown-haired, brown-eyed people, like I was so used to seeing growing up.”

She remembers experiencing blatant racism for the first time during her college years, which sparked her interest in advocating for her fellow students of color and eventually influenced her career choices.



“WHAT DRIVES ME IN THIS WORK IS MY LOVE FOR NATIVE PEOPLE. I WANT TO DO WHAT I CAN TO HELP US SURVIVE IN THIS MODERN WORLD AND TO SMOOTH OUT WHAT HAS BEEN A DIFFICULT AND ROCKY PATH IN THE HISTORY OF OUR COUNTRY. THAT OFTEN MEANS UNRAVELING WHAT HAS BEEN IN PLACE AND PUTTING THINGS BACK TOGETHER SO THAT LIFE CAN BE BETTER FOR OUR PEOPLE.” — WENDY HELGEMO '91



IMPACTFUL ACHIEVEMENTS

Though their accomplishments are many, one of their most poignant — and public — achievements is the freshly revamped Minneapolis American Indian Center. The plan behind that renovation dates back to LaGarde's days as its interim director in 2013, when she invited the public to provide feedback about how the community hub could better meet their needs through listening sessions. That collective visioning process resulted in a state-of-the-art, culturally relevant center designed by architect and board president Sam Olbekson (White Earth). The new building boasts an updated fitness center, an expanded art gallery, upgraded meeting areas, thoughtful spaces to accommodate youth and elder programming, and similar improvements.

More than a decade in the making, the remodel reflects LaGarde's tireless work since her start with the center, helping breathe new life into the neighborhood hub that in recent decades had become more heavily focused on providing social services. In so many ways, the renovation is a rebirth for the center 50 years after its inception.

And yet many original elements remain, such as a steadfast dedication to serving the community and a 1974 commissioned mural by renowned Grand Portage Chippewa artist George Morrison adorning an exterior wall. Featuring chevron shapes that create an optical illusion of sorts, the large-scale unnamed work was referred to as “Turning the Feather Around: A Mural for the Indian” by its late creator.

“This incredibly beautiful, energy-efficient building will be here for generations to come,” LaGarde says. “The ground blessing [in January 2023] was a very, very proud moment for me, having Lieutenant Governor Peggy Flanagan, Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey, community members, funders, and friends and family all there to celebrate.”

Not far away on bustling East Lake Street is the Division of Indian Work, which began as a temporary food shelf program offered by the Greater Minneapolis Council of

Churches in 1952. It aimed to provide for the vast Native population that was being relocated from reservations to the metro area at the time in an attempt to diminish the power of Indian Country. Since then, the Division of Indian Work has expanded its services to include a variety of culture-based programming.

More recently, Matson oversaw the organization's amicable separation from the Greater Minneapolis Council of Churches in 2018. The massive undertaking required years of structural rebuilding but has allowed the Division of Indian Work full autonomy as a “Native-led, Native-staffed nonprofit with a majority Native board that's serving Native people,” Matson says proudly.

That unified approach was particularly important in 2020, with a global pandemic raging on and Minneapolis acting as ground zero for a racial reckoning after George Floyd's murder. Situated just a mile from where he was killed, the Division of Indian Work was at the center of the ensuing social unrest that shook the city. “That was probably the biggest challenge of my career: How do you survive as a direct-service social service agency during a pandemic and an uprising?” Matson recalls.

Like so many Twin Cities residents, she was frightened by the tumult. “Everybody was scared, but we kept our agency open while everything else burned down around us,” she says. “When it became clear that things were getting out of control, we packed up as much as we could — our sacred items like our drum and eagle staff as well as our art and our financial documents. I was at home just in despair when I got a text that said, ‘We're here, Louise.’”

That message came from American Indian Movement activists, who were standing guard at the Division of Indian Work, Little Earth, and other cultural institutions like nearby Norway House.

“I get emotional about it, because I didn't ask for them to come,” she says. “After MIGIZI burned down, they were like, ‘We aren't losing anything else.’ That's why we have



WENDY HELGEMO '91 | HO-CHUNK



“IT’S THRILLING TO SEE. JUST LOOK AT OUR LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR, PEGGY FLANAGAN. SHE’S FROM WHITE EARTH, AND SHE’S THE HIGHEST ELECTED NATIVE FEMALE OFFICIAL IN THE COUNTRY. WE ALSO HAVE MARY KUNESH (STANDING ROCK LAKOTA DESCENDANT) AND LIISH KOZLOWSKI (OJIBWE/MEXICAN). TO WITNESS THAT REPRESENTATION IS SUCH A PRIVILEGE.” — LOUISE MATSON ‘89



this huge mural by City Mischief and artists like Thomasina TopBear on the side of our building that says ‘thank you’ in Anishinaabe, Dakota, and Ho-Chunk for those protectors who protected us.”

Throughout the pandemic, Matson sought guidance from LaGarde and MIGIZI President Kelly Drummer about how to adapt programming so the Division of Indian Work could provide for the community. The food shelf — still in place since the organization’s beginning — continued to operate but in an adapted fashion that allowed for social distancing. Some youth and counseling offerings went remote, though Matson is glad they have returned to in-person services since then. “Just surviving that time was a huge accomplishment,” she says.

While Helgemo’s influences are perhaps less visible on a local stage, she has left an indelible mark on Indian Country at large. During her nearly 20 years in Washington, D.C., she was involved in countless policy discussions and decisions with far-reaching impacts.

“I made my way there because I wanted to be a part of creating better lives and opportunities for Native people,” she says. “Along the way, I have learned more about Alaska Natives and Native Hawaiians, so I’ve been very cognizant about making sure that they also have a voice and that their rights and interests are protected.”

Upon moving to the nation’s capital in 2005, she joined the National Indian Gaming Commission as a staff attorney, then spent three years as director of government affairs for the National American Indian Housing Council. In that role, she spearheaded the Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Reauthorization Act of 2008 and fought for the inclusion of tribal funding in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.

After that, she spent seven years in the halls of Congress as senior advisor on Indian affairs to late Democratic Senator Harry Reid of Nevada, including several of his years as majority leader. During that time, she was

instrumental in the passing of the Violence Against Women Act of 2013, which offers greater protections for Native, immigrant, and LGBTQIA+ individuals, as well as the bipartisan Nevada Native Nations Land Act. Signed into law by President Barack Obama, it placed more than 71,000 acres of onetime Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service lands into federal trust status for six Nevada tribes.

After Reid retired in 2017, Helgemo was tapped to serve as the inaugural director of the first-of-its-kind AT&T Center for Indigenous Politics and Policy at the George Washington University, with a goal of “ensuring there are more staffers on Capitol Hill who actually look like America,” she says. She also acted as a legislative attorney and a policy consultant before making her way back to the Land of 10,000 Lakes earlier this year.

LASTING LEGACIES

Like so many of us, Helgemo is encouraged by the historic Indigenous representation we’re seeing in politics and beyond. “Native people have gone to Washington, D.C. for hundreds of years to fight for their land and their rights,” she says. “Having Native people in these decision-making roles — like Congressman Tom Cole (Chickasaw), Congresswoman Sharice Davids (Ho-Chunk), and Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland — really matters in ensuring that Native Americans aren’t left behind.”

Reflecting on the current Indigenous reckoning, LaGarde says it’s been a long time coming. “For so many years, we’ve been overlooked and put to the side,” she explains. “There’s just so much that has happened over the years that has negatively affected the rights of our people. Now, watching our Native people making a difference is just tremendous to witness.”


Matson agrees. “It’s thrilling to see,” she gushes. “Just look at our lieutenant governor, Peggy Flanagan. She’s from White Earth, and she’s the highest elected Native female official in the country. We also have Mary Kunesh




LOUISE MATSON '89 | WHITE EARTH



MARY LAGARDE '91 | WHITE EARTH



“FOR SO MANY YEARS, WE’VE BEEN OVERLOOKED AND PUT TO THE SIDE. THERE’S JUST SO MUCH THAT HAS HAPPENED OVER THE YEARS THAT HAS NEGATIVELY AFFECTED THE RIGHTS OF OUR PEOPLE. NOW, WATCHING OUR NATIVE PEOPLE MAKING A DIFFERENCE IS JUST TREMENDOUS TO WITNESS.” — MARY LAGARDE ‘91



(Standing Rock Lakota descendant) and Liish Kozlowski (Ojibwe/Mexican). To witness that representation is such a privilege.” Flanagan has mutual respect for Matson, who she worked for at the Division of Indian Work, and credits her for shaping her career.

A bibliophile, Matson is also inspired by the many Minnesota-based Indigenous voices in literature, including Louise Erdrich (Turtle Mountain Chippewa), inaugural Minneapolis poet laureate Heid E. Erdrich (Turtle Mountain Chippewa), and Marcie Rendon (White Earth). When Louise Erdrich visited St. Olaf during a book tour for her debut novel, *Love Medicine*, back in the 1980s, Matson was starstruck: “I just love her, and I was thrilled to be able to hear her read.”

Although this recent recognition of and respect for Indigenous cultures is certainly cause for celebration, Helgemo, LaGarde, and Matson are all focused on the future and what’s yet to be accomplished. There’s still a great amount of healing that needs to be done within tribal communities and a great amount of education that needs to be done to help non-Natives fully understand the issues impacting tribal communities.

“As an executive director, part of my job is to secure funding for our activities,” Matson says. “So I walk that line — I’m sure Mary does, too — where I need to make the case for funding because of our disparities, but I also don’t want people to feel sorry for Native people. What we tend to see featured in the media [about Native people] is the poverty porn, which just frustrates me.”

She recalls a story about her dad, who grew up listening to the audio of cowboy and Indian movies in the theater because he and his cousins didn’t have money to buy tickets. They always cheered for the cowboys because, as he later explained to his daughter, “you cheered for the winners.” Looking ahead, Matson hopes her work focused on Native youth will instill in them a sense of pride, unlike past generations who were taught to resent their Indigeneity.

Helgemo — who says she “eats, sleeps, and breathes politics” — wants to see even more representation in the

places that matter, such as in Washington, D.C. “What drives me in this work is my love for Native people,” she says. “I want to do what I can to help us survive in this modern world and to smooth out what has been a difficult and rocky path in the history of our country. That often means unraveling what has been in place and putting things back together so that life can be better for our people.”

She’s particularly proud of her work related to boarding school healing and the restoration of ancestral homelands to tribal ownership, and she wants to see further progress made on both those fronts. Helgemo is also itching to get involved in Indigenous entertainment. “It’s such a celebration of our people — our whimsy, humor, and creativity,” she says with a smile. “I have wanted to write a screenplay since my 20s, so maybe now’s the time.”

LaGarde envisions a future where Native cultures are as rich and thriving as they once were. “My hope is that we don’t have to call it ‘language revitalization’ because it’s no longer being revitalized,” she says. “Instead, it’s just taught to everyone, along with our cultural practices that sadly haven’t been passed down due to the trauma of boarding schools, assimilation, and relocation. We’ve come so far, but we still need to keep educating, we still need to keep fighting.”

She is inspired by her 2-year-old grandson, who is already embracing his multiracial identity as an Ojibwe Vietnamese American. “He goes to drum and dance classes at the Indian Center,” LaGarde explains. “I hear him learning Vietnamese, and I’m hoping he will pick up the Ojibwe language, too. He’s such a special kid, and I spend as much time with him as I can.”

Above all, LaGarde wants to carry on the lasting legacies of her impressive predecessors. “I think about our Indigenous leaders who have walked on, including all these powerful women who started and led these organizations for our people,” she says. “I just hope I’m doing justice to everything they’ve done before me.” It’s safe to say that she and her fellow Indigenous luminaries are indeed doing just that. 🍀

NATIVE WISDOM

BY KATE NELSON

PHOTOGRAPHED BY JAIDA GREY EAGLE

SEAN SHERMAN, A
NATIONALLY KNOWN NATIVE
AMERICAN CHEF AND
THOUGHT LEADER, MADE A
VISIT TO ST. OLAF AS PART
OF THE INSTITUTE FOR
FREEDOM AND COMMUNITY'S
SPRING SPEAKER SERIES.



Sean Sherman in Holland Hall ahead of his March 5 talk on campus. Sherman is the founder of Owamni, a Minneapolis restaurant showcasing modern Indigenous foods that won a 2022 James Beard Award. Last year he made *TIME* magazine's list of the 100 Most Influential People and won the prestigious Julia Child Award.

SEAN SHERMAN IS A MAN ON A MISSION.

The Oglala Lakota chef behind the internationally renowned Minneapolis restaurant Owamni has dedicated the past decade to revitalizing Native American foodways and wisdom. His initial inspiration was to learn more about his own tribe's food systems and to help address the health issues — disproportionate rates of obesity, Type 2 diabetes, and heart disease — that plague Indigenous communities. But the impacts of Sherman's efforts reach far beyond Indian Country, earning him well-deserved accolades like TIME 100 honors, the Julia Child Award, and several James Beard Foundation Awards.

After growing up on South Dakota's Pine Ridge reservation — which has some of the highest poverty rates in the nation and lowest life expectancies in the world — Sherman pursued a career in the restaurant world. He made his way to the Twin Cities, where he became a pro at cooking Spanish, French, and other European cuisines while working at top eateries. This made him wonder: Why didn't he know more about his own people's food?

That query led him on a yearslong journey to discover as much as he could about Indigenous foodways from elders, ethnobotanists, historians, and other knowledge keepers. Although he is always learning about the rich, diverse Indigenous communities worldwide, he now spends any time away from the kitchen educating others about the importance of Indigenous wisdom and the atrocities that Native peoples have faced due to colonialism. St. Olaf students got a taste of Sherman's teachings — and his fare — this spring when he visited campus as part of the Institute for Freedom and Community's *Food Policy and Food Politics* speaker series.

More than 250 students, faculty, staff, and community members packed into Tomson Hall in early March eager to listen to the Indigenous thought leader. The event kicked off with a touching introduction from his sister, theologian and St. Olaf faculty member Kelly Sherman-Conroy. "Sean's story is a testament to the power of education, to the power and strength of cultural identity, and to the importance of sustainability — all the values that St. Olaf holds dear, and what we teach and what we live," she said. "Sean's work is a living and breathing example of a commitment to learning, of service and respect."

"NO MATTER WHERE WE ARE IN NORTH AMERICA, WE'RE STANDING ON INDIGENOUS LAND SPACES, BUT THERE'S BARELY ANY REPRESENTATION OF INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES OUT THERE." — SEAN SHERMAN

Sherman then took to the stage and regaled the captive audience with an informative yet approachable speech, not unlike his popular 2020 TEDx Talk. He began with a recap of his culinary odyssey sparked by the "invisibility of Native cuisine" and a description of his decolonized food philosophy: sans standard Eurocentric ingredients such as beef, pork, chicken, dairy, wheat flour, and cane sugar.

But to understand the importance of decolonizing food, it's vital to recognize how colonialism all but destroyed Native lifeways. Luckily, Sherman's affable nature makes what could otherwise be challenging topics like colonialism, genocide, and forced assimilation more digestible.

"The easiest way to understand colonialism," he said, "is just to Google it." As the crowd laughed at his jest, he went on to explain that this dehumanizing, exploitative act for political gain is still happening in places across the globe such as Ukraine, the Middle East, and East Congo. And it's the reason why Owamni — one of the country's first full-service Native-focused restaurants — seems so unique on a continent that was once filled with thriving Indigenous societies.

"No matter where we are in North America, we're standing on Indigenous land spaces, but there's barely any representation of Indigenous communities out there," Sherman said in describing the destructive origin story of the United States. His accompanying presentation showcased how the land space once stewarded by Native peoples has shrunk over time to only about 2 percent of the country. That loss was accompanied by a massive decimation of biodiversity and the attempted annihilation of important food sources like bison.

Sherman went on to detail the many traumas Native peoples have experienced, including disconnection, displacement, and dispossession. He explained how boarding schools' violent acts of forced assimilation aimed to wipe out Indigenous knowledge and supplant it with Western teachings. But despite these efforts to eradicate Native peoples, Indigenous knowledge about the power of food lives on in the hundreds of tribal communities across North America.

If you know what to look for, Sherman attests, there's food everywhere. "You don't have to go to the grocery store [for all your food]," he said. "You can stand in one spot in Minnesota and see all these ingredients around you, like rabbit, white cedar, wild rice, cranberries, and maple. That's how we should be thinking about food — seeing the world completely differently and realizing what it has to offer."

To that end, his Minneapolis nonprofit, North American Traditional Indigenous Food Systems (NĀTIFS), is all about giving people access to Native knowledge. The Indigenous Food Lab Market located at Midtown Global Market serves as a professional incubator kitchen and training center as well as a marketplace where curious home cooks can purchase ingredients — such as bison, heritage corn, wild rice, handmade tortillas, and more — from Native purveyors. (There's also a handy online store.)

(R)EVOLUTION OF INDIGENOUS FOODWAYS

- BY CHEF SEAN SHERMAN



Sean Sherman speaks to the more than 250 people who gathered in Tomson Hall in March to hear his insight on revitalizing Native American foodways and wisdom.

Sherman went on to illustrate how his work is inextricably intertwined with a larger movement to return to greater interconnectedness. “We need to be better humans. We need to understand people who are different from us. We need to help feed people who need food. Food has so much power, and we need to take that power back.”

Although his impact is undeniable, Sherman realizes that the massive change he hopes to see might not happen

in his lifetime — which is why he uses his platform to encourage younger generations to take action. “It’s so important that we wake people up about these issues,” he said in an interview. “We need to realize it’s up to us all to steward Indigenous knowledge while also calling out colonialism in action when we see it. There are real ramifications to inaction, and we can easily slip backward. Just because so much of this happened in the past doesn’t mean it can’t also be the future.”

Sophia Stout ’23 (Lac Courte Oreilles Band of Ojibwe) attended Sherman’s talk. Before graduating last spring, she started the Indigenous Peoples Organization at St. Olaf to help bring greater awareness to Native issues. She was glad to see her alma mater amplifying a voice like Sherman’s.

“St. Olaf is a primarily white institution, so it’s important for Native students to see someone like Sean Sherman and witness his amazing success,” she says. “St. Olaf students, staff, and faculty should be educating themselves about issues surrounding BIPOC peoples.”

That’s precisely why Professor of Political Science Chris Chapp, who is also director of the Institute for Freedom and Community, invited Sherman to speak at St. Olaf. “Not only is Sean Sherman a truly revolutionary voice in food, he also articulates his case forcefully with a degree of moral

“WE LEARN THE MOST WHEN WE STEP OUTSIDE OUR COMFORT ZONES. SHERMAN’S WORK CERTAINLY DOES THIS, CHALLENGING US TO THINK DIFFERENTLY ABOUT HISTORY, IDENTITY, AND FOOD.”

— CHRIS CHAPP, DIRECTOR OF THE ST. OLAF INSTITUTE FOR FREEDOM AND COMMUNITY



St. Olaf faculty member Kelly Sherman-Conroy (second from left) leads her students in a conversation with Sean Sherman during his visit to campus.

clarity that is quite rare,” he contends. “We learn the most when we step outside our comfort zones. Sherman’s work certainly does this, challenging us to think differently about history, identity, and food.” The institute also sponsored a trip for 20 students to visit the Indigenous Food Lab in Minneapolis.

Theater faculty member Sara Pillatzki-Warzeha (Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate/German) attended both Sherman’s talk and the Indigenous Food Lab field trip. She is deeply engaged in the thriving Twin Cities Native community, including serving on the Guthrie Theater’s Native Advisory Council.

“As someone who already has familiarity with chef Sherman’s work, what thrilled me most was watching the non-Native students’ excitement and knowledge grow and seeing the small cohort of Native students feel connected, affirmed, and celebrated,” she says. “Sean’s rise over the past few years has been an exciting part of growth and reclamation for Native folks and an important part of educating our non-Native relatives, too. At the heart of that is a sense of kindness for our bodies, our knowledges, our communities, and our non-human relatives that we need so badly right now — which I think is exactly why we’re experiencing an Indigenous renaissance.”

Martin Olague ’04, director of the Taylor Center for Equity and Inclusion, understands the importance of creating space for these perspectives. “We have always started our story with Norwegian immigrants and have ignored important Native American voices for far too long,” he says. “You can’t fully have diversity and inclusion until all voices are included, and this talk helped bring that voice forward. St. Olaf is not the only institution to struggle with creating spaces for its Native community, but that doesn’t mean we should continue doing things how we always have.”

A changemaker in her own right, Stout is planning to plant a garden of exclusively endemic produce as a result of hearing Sherman’s talk. “The conversation about decolonizing food really stuck with me,” she says. “One part of colonization has been bringing food from other places here that is not natural and that has affected the ecosystem. This has inspired me to do some research about growing my own garden with only Native foods — hopefully it goes well.”

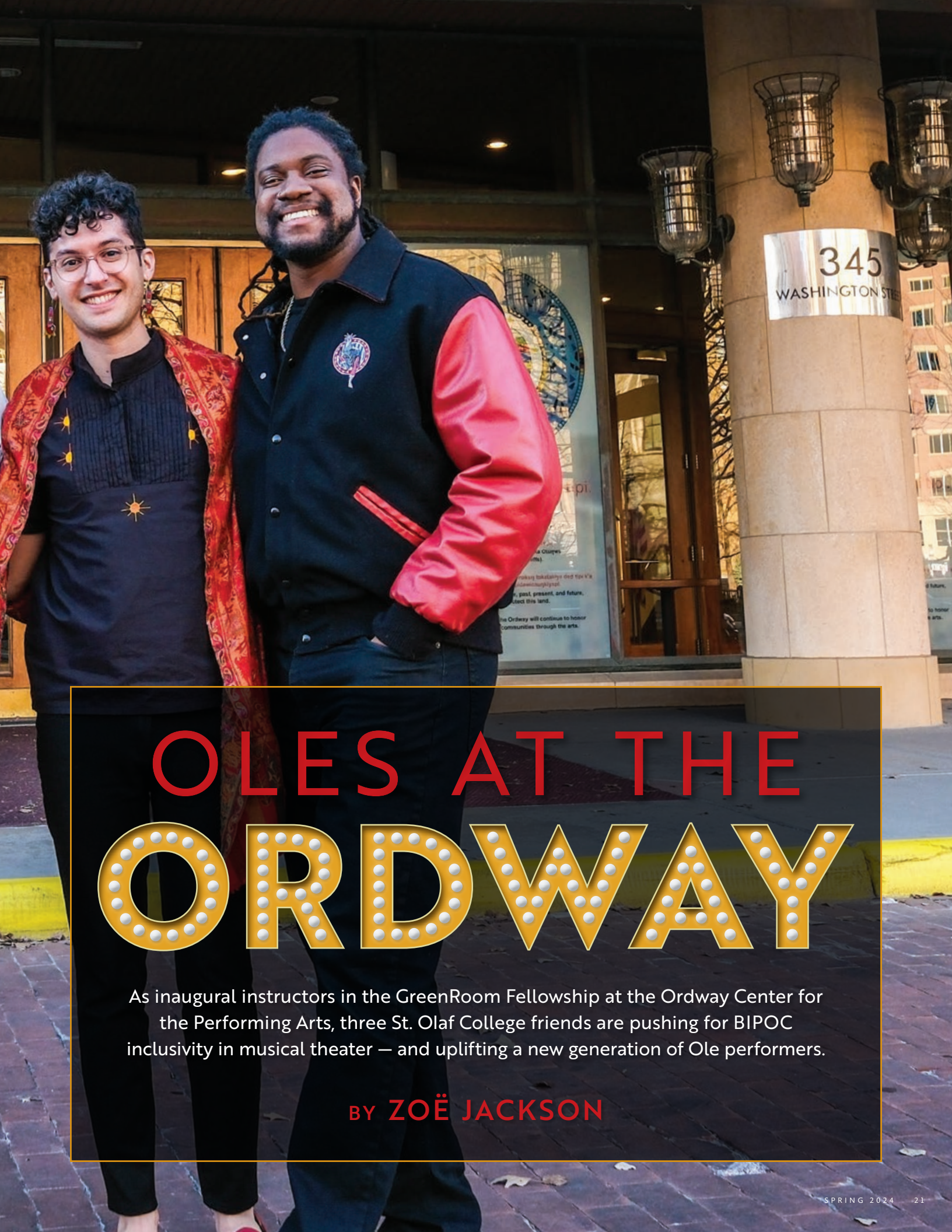
This seemingly small yet incredibly significant action perfectly reflects Sherman’s key takeaway: If we can control our food, we can control our destiny. 🍌



St. Olaf students, faculty, and staff tour the Indigenous Food Lab at Midtown Global Market. PHOTO BY CARTER SCHAFER '24



Yolanda Pauly '25, Natalia Romero Arbeláez '15, Paulina Mórera Quesada '24, Jared Miller '17, and Denzel Belin '15 outside the Ordway Center for the Performing Arts in downtown St. Paul. PHOTOGRAPHED BY STEVEN GARCIA '20



OLE PERFORMERS AT THE ORDWAY

As inaugural instructors in the GreenRoom Fellowship at the Ordway Center for the Performing Arts, three St. Olaf College friends are pushing for BIPOC inclusivity in musical theater — and uplifting a new generation of Ole performers.

BY ZOË JACKSON

When Natalia Romero Arbeláez '15 was selected to become one of the inaugural faculty members leading the new GreenRoom Fellowship at the Ordway Center for the Performing Arts, she was thrilled at the opportunity to share her expertise in musical theater.

And when organizers asked her to recommend other talented artists of color who could help lead and inspire a new generation of performers, Romero Arbeláez knew exactly where to turn: fellow Oles Denzel Belin '15 and Jared Miller '17.

Belin is a longtime cast member and writer at The Brave New Workshop, and Miller has developed a career as a professional pianist and music teacher. The three worked together on a Lyric Theater production at St. Olaf College a decade ago, and have collaborated many times over the years.

“My favorite pianist to work with is Jared Miller,” Romero Arbeláez told staff members at the Ordway. “And I have this friend Denzel who does everything — improv and acting, stand-up and hosting — and he’s so great.”

Soon all three St. Olaf alumni were on the program’s faculty and playing an instrumental role in launching GreenRoom, a paid six-week musical theater fellowship created to nurture artists of color. Beyond just teaching musical theater, the faculty members are tasked with building up Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) and other artists who are underrepresented in an industry where they face more barriers to entry.

...

Established by the Ordway in 2022, the GreenRoom Fellowship is open to dancers, singers, and actors of any age group. Housed at one of the country’s leading nonprofit performing arts centers and led by exceptional instructors, it’s a highly competitive fellowship that attracts top talent. So it was especially exciting, Romero Arbeláez says, when not one, but two current St. Olaf students were among the 11 artists selected for the

GreenRoom Fellowship last summer.

For students Yolanda Pauly '25 and Paulina Morera Quesada '24, the opportunity was a dream come true. The fellowship not only provided hands-on experience in the performing arts, but the chance to connect with professionals in Minnesota’s theater and arts scene.

“I’ve never felt so lucky in my life,” says Pauly, who is majoring in dance with a race and ethnic studies concentration.

To have instructors who are St. Olaf graduates was equally amazing, says Morera Quesada, who is majoring in Inclusivity in the Performing Arts, an individual major developed through the St. Olaf Center for Integrative Studies.

“It was very sweet to know that these are people of color who went to St. Olaf and are making it. And now they’re teaching me,” Morera Quesada says.

CREATING A SUPPORTIVE SPACE

The GreenRoom Fellowship, led by the Ordway’s Maia Maiden, provides students with a stipend of \$2,500 and help with transportation to the performing arts center, which is located in downtown St. Paul. Students attend classes daily from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., and the program culminates in a performance at the end of the summer. About 200 guests gathered in the Ordway concert hall last August to watch the group perform two improv sketches and musical numbers to open and close the show. Each fellow individually performed a song or monologue and presented a two-minute TED Talk.

Twenty-one fellows have participated in GreenRoom since its inaugural year in 2022. Fellows from the program’s first and second years are already making strides toward professional careers — Belin even worked with a fellow last fall on a Twin Cities Horror Fest show.

GreenRoom instructors spend time with students working on music, dance, and acting techniques, as well as strategies for performing musical theater in a way that’s healthy and sustainable. The goal of the program is to address a question that is simultaneously simple and complex: “How can we create an empowering, safe, sacred space to just exist as people in the theater community whose stories aren’t always told or embraced?” says Romero Arbeláez, who is the choir and musical theater director at The Blake School in Minneapolis.

In his GreenRoom class on improv and auditioning, Belin discusses singing songs that weren’t written by or for diverse people, and the kinds of stories about one’s cultures that are available — and whether they were written by people who share it. These discussions feel different and powerful in rooms that put racial diversity at the forefront, he says.

Oles Paulina Morera Quesada '24,
Denzel Belin '15, and Yolanda Pauly '25
onstage at the Ordway last August
during the closing night of the 2023
GreenRoom Fellowship program.
PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE ORDWAY



"If I can get up on this absolutely magnificent, absolutely beautiful, incredible stage in the Ordway that seats over 1,000 people, I feel very confident and ready to take the steps of applying to an audition or an open call."

— Yolanda Pauly '25, Ordway Center for the Performing Arts GreenRoom Fellow





Ordway Education Coordinator Ololade Gbadamosi (top left) and Director of Arts Learning and Community Engagement Maia Maiden (top right) worked closely during the GreenRoom Fellowship with Oles (clockwise, from center left) Denzel Belin '15, Paulina Morera Quesada '24, Natalia Romero Arbeláez '15, Jared Miller '17, and Yolanda Pauly '25. PHOTOGRAPHED BY STEVEN GARCIA '20

“This is beautifully hard work. Creating something from the ground up with undeniable authenticity, excellence, and impact on multiple levels is challenging — but it is so important, joyous, and amazing.”

— Maia Maiden, Ordway Center for the Performing Arts Director of Arts Learning and Community Engagement

“A lot of what I do with my teaching of improvisation is not necessarily one of the three core skills of musical theater — it’s not singing, acting, or dancing. But it makes you a better person in the room,” says Belin, who in addition to his acting is also a staff writer for AWF magazine.

Miller and Romero Arbeláez co-teach singing and vocal technique in a class called “Finding Your Story.” Over the course of the program, they help their students put together well-rounded audition binders that show a range of skills based on their experiences with audition panels.

Miller coaches the fellows on setting reasonable standards for themselves as artists, how to handle performance anxiety, and how to face the disappointment that comes with their chosen career.

“You have to audition. You have to get rejections. Sometimes it might be a longer string of rejections before you get a success. How do you take that and learn from it?” Miller says.

Maiden, the director of arts learning and community engagement at the Ordway, says those are exactly the type of lessons she hoped to provide young artists when she founded GreenRoom.

“This is beautifully hard work. Creating something from the ground up with undeniable authenticity, excellence, and impact on multiple levels is challenging — but it is so important, joyous, and amazing,” Maiden says. “When I approached Natalia, Jared, and Denzel, they not only had to believe in me as a new director at the Ordway but also that this fellowship was going to work. I had to believe in them bringing their extraordinary talents in the performing arts to teaching in this modality, not to mention their ability to rock this. We decided to take this reciprocal belief and ride down this road together. The result? Wonderful fellows like Paulina and Yolanda who knew they wanted more and believed GreenRoom was the perfect space to make that happen.”

In the first few weeks of last summer's fellowship, GreenRoom students were quiet as they weighed how competitive it would be and focused on getting as much from the program as possible. As the weeks went on, everyone became closer, willing to help one another through their struggles by sharing strengths, Morera Quesada says.

"It was so beautiful. And we got to know each other so well. It helped me visualize my life as an artist in a different way," Morera Quesada adds.

In those classrooms a weight was taken off of their shoulders, says Pauly. There was no need to exhaust herself and her emotions by explaining how it has impacted her to not have a wide range of Black or Latino dance professors. It felt liberating to have these shared experiences and to feel confident in being a woman of color, she adds.

"They understood," Pauly says. "It's just so incredible when you have those moments — when you have people who look like you around you."

As graduation and the professional dance world approaches, Pauly says she now feels excited and confident to enter it as her full self.

"If I can get up on this absolutely magnificent, absolutely beautiful, incredible stage in the Ordway that seats over 1,000 people, I feel very confident and ready to take the steps of applying to an audition or an open call," she says.

RAISING EACH OTHER UP

The three St. Olaf alumni say it was powerful to work with students of color coming from their alma mater. Although they appreciate the efforts they have seen St. Olaf make in recent years to create a more inclusive community, they note that many of the conversations within GreenRoom would have been difficult to have on campus even a decade ago.

Belin was one of just two Black theater majors in his class at St. Olaf, and he balanced theater productions and internships with the campus work study and summer jobs he needed to cover his tuition. Miller pushed to make space for the Spanish classical music he wanted to learn amid a focus on Germanic and Russian piano composers. Romero Arbeláez fought to music direct the musical *In the Heights* as a Colombian immigrant while struggling to pay for school.

It's part of why a paid fellowship like GreenRoom is so crucial — it allows students to focus on developing their craft rather than worry how they'll pay for gas or public transit to get to the Ordway or how they'll pay for college without a summer income.

Belin points out that there was a time when theaters would ask assistant directors to work nearly full-time without a stipend. "That is a very select group of people who can afford to do that. And so rarely is that a diverse group of people. Limiting the amount of financial sacrifice

that you have to do so that you can bring your full self into the room is, frankly, revolutionary," he says.

In some ways, sharing their own life experience and the barriers they faced was cathartic for the group of instructors.

"I'm 30. I don't particularly consider myself to be the end-all expert. But also, I truly don't believe you have to be an expert in order to dialogue, to share your gifts. I may not have all the answers, but I have some of them. And I know I'm really damn good at improvisation," Belin says.

Within Minnesota's predominantly white performing community, it feels crucial for a program like GreenRoom to exist, Miller adds.

"I think it's important to have a program that is not for white people where the artists can come and see that they do belong, and there are people who are like them who also belong and are succeeding in a place that sometimes doesn't feel like it's for them," Miller says.

The GreenRoom instructors were able to work with fellows on creating a space and community that felt good, affirming, and safe, says Romero Arbeláez.

"It was really special to be able to see them grow, and for us to grow as educators, and then to get to see them at the showcase where they just sang and performed so beautifully," she says.

Most days last summer, Miller and Romero Arbeláez left class and ended up talking for a half hour or so, to debrief and discuss what they would do the next day, Miller says. They work hard — but have such a good time together it often doesn't even feel like work, he says.

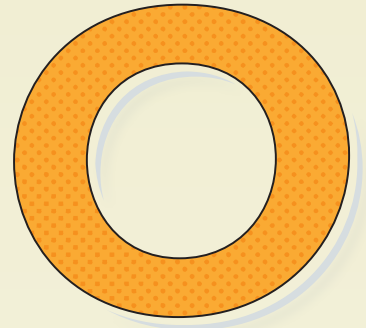
Since graduation, Miller has already worked with St. Olaf professors who now see him as a professional colleague. Even within GreenRoom, by the end of the summer, their students were their professional colleagues, too, Belin adds.

As the final GreenRoom performance approached, Romero Arbeláez and Belin stood backstage together, she recalls. They snapped a photo of one another beneath a sign that read "The Ordway Concert Hall, Stage Right Entrance." In the photos, they were both grinning.

"We just looked at each other, like, we're here," she says. "We went to this tiny little school in Northfield, Minnesota, and now here we are in a professional concert hall at the Ordway, backstage together. Because I got the gig and what did I do? I raised up my friends. And here we are together." 🐾



10 Years of



OLE CUP

Entrepreneurs

The annual student entrepreneurial competition has helped launch a string of successful businesses — and scores of Oles who have a passion for innovative, impactful work.

By Kari VanDerVeen

ILLUSTRATION BY EMILY JOYNTON '10

When St. Olaf College launched a business pitch competition 10 years ago, the goal was simple: show students that a liberal arts education provides them with the perfect set of tools to become successful entrepreneurs.

That first year, the Piper Center for Vocation and Career supported 13 students through the development of their business ideas and welcomed seven teams to the stage to pitch their ideas in the inaugural Ole Cup. The winner was JonnyPops, a frozen treat company that is now a multi-million dollar business with products available at major retailers like Target and Costco.

Over the last decade, more than 150 students have participated in the Ole Cup, and the college has awarded more than \$250,000 in prize money to teams to help fund their ventures. The competition has not only launched a string of thriving businesses, but scores of Oles who have a passion for innovative, impactful work in a wide range of fields.

“Students are challenged in the liberal arts to wrestle with complexity and ambiguity, and they have the foundational skills necessary to tackle the unknown head-on. The Ole Cup only accelerates those skills through the development of a business plan and pitching an idea to a panel of judges,” says Piper Center for Vocation and Career Director Kirsten Cahoon '98. “The ability to research ideas and test assumptions, paired with strong rhetorical skills, prepares Oles to confidently take on any post-graduate opportunity.”



Conceived by the late Brad Cleveland '82, who helped turn Proto Labs into one of Minnesota's leading technology companies, the Ole Cup is a key part of a long-standing, rich ecosystem of entrepreneurship on campus. The college's entrepreneurship program launched in 1992 with the Paul Finstad Endowment. St. Olaf was among the first undergraduate liberal arts institutions to launch an entrepreneurial grant program, which today continues providing seed money to students in the early stages of venture creation.

"The grants aim to support the idea and testing phase of a venture, providing students with the opportunity to dig deep and prototype a concept, confirming feasibility — or failure — prior to moving into the business plan stage," says Piper Center Associate Director Meghan McMillan.

The Ole Cup puts business plans in front of a panel of judges that include business leaders and alumni at the top of their field. As students sharpen their pitches for the competition, they have access to a network of devoted alumni who serve as mentors, experts, and sources of support and inspiration. McMillan has also developed strong partnerships with entrepreneurial incubators like Red Wing Ignite and the E1 (Entrepreneurs First) Collaborative, and those relationships provide students with external expertise from regional partners and business leaders.

"Ole Cup students have a wide range of majors, are involved in different organizations and ensembles and teams on campus, and oftentimes are not studying business or entrepreneurship. Instead, the throughline

is their ability to think critically about the demands of our global world by developing creative, innovative solutions," Cahoon says. "This curiosity and lifelong learning — and willingness to take a leap of faith into the unknown with excitement and passion — is at the core of what makes Ole Cup participants so impressive."

Coupled with courses across the curriculum, as well as the Innovation Scholar Programs, Svoboda Entrepreneurial Scholars cohort internship program, Connections Programs, and study abroad/away opportunities, St. Olaf has a wide range of entry points and immersive activities to help students identify their interests and build skills.

To see the end result of the hard work that goes into the Ole Cup each year is inspiring, McMillan says.

"The ideas that are pitched every year shine a light on the competitive edge of the liberal arts education," she says. "When Oles persevere, their ideas change lives." 🙌

As the Ole Cup celebrated its 10th anniversary this spring, alumni of the competition reflect on the impact it had, the lessons they took away, and where they are now.

Pumla Maswanganyi '16

Majors: Studio Art and African Identities: Media & Development

Current Career: Founder and director of by lue. and MM+co, pioneers of African Life Centric Design

Ole Cup Pitch: Nimble Fingers, a venture to offer micro-finance loans and vocational training for young women facing the prospect of child marriage in Nigeria

The Ole Cup served as the launching pad for Maswanganyi and her teammate, Precious Ismail '17, to successfully win a Resolution Project Fellowship while attending the Clinton Global Initiative University in San Francisco.

"The key lesson I will never forget from Ole Cup was the feedback Piper Center Director Leslie Moore '77 offered on our pitch. We initially said that 'We aim to ...' and she stopped us and said that women are often the ones who take a step back saying that they 'hope to' accomplish something, or 'aim to' accomplish something, rather than owning that we already are accomplishing that very thing. That not only stayed with me, but it's been a lesson I've had the honor to pass forward in entrepreneurship. More often than not, we're already putting in the effort and not taking a step back to fully recognize that." — PUMLA MASWANGANYI '16



Erik Brust '14

Major: Economics

Current Career: CEO and Co-Founder of JonnyPops

Connor Wray '14

Majors: Computer Science and Economics

Current Career: CFO and Co-Founder of JonnyPops

Ole Cup Pitch: JonnyPops, a company that creates frozen treats with simple ingredients

"Participating in the Ole Cup was essential to getting JonnyPops off the ground. We conceived the idea and started from humble beginnings, perfecting formulas and running the business out of the basement of our college dorm. The Ole Cup helped us develop the necessary skills to move from great ideas to good business. It put us in conversation with mentors who have a mind for business. They taught us how to fine-tune marketing strategies, build a strong network of alumni advisors, and expand the reach of our business. Without the guidance we received through the Ole Cup, JonnyPops wouldn't be the business it is today."

— ERIK BRUST '14



St. Olaf leaders toured the new JonnyPops facility this April. The group included (from left) Vice President for Enrollment and College Relations Michael Kyle '85, Piper Center Director Kirsten Cahoon '98, Vice President for Advancement Enoch Blazis, Sarah Beth Sivanich Brust '13, Erik Brust '14, Connor Wray '14, Tom Brust '80, Susan Brust '80, St. Olaf President Susan Rundell Singer, Chief Marketing Officer Katie Warren '95, and Piper Center Associate Director Meghan McMillan.

"Winning the Ole Cup was central to my career path. My early learnings from our business model and the experiences that followed the Ole Cup helped position me as a local expert in leveraging technology to improve food supply chains. I've followed this vocational focus as a social enterprise fellow through the Bush Foundation's FINNOVATION Lab, as a graduate student and researcher at the Carlson School of Management, and, in the past few years, working for technology startups on challenges that include hyperlocal grocery procurement, climate change, and regenerative agriculture. I also learned that entrepreneurship is active — it gives you a framework to notice a problem, get up, learn about it, and use what you learned to solve it. This process requires failure, vulnerability, and flexible thinking. The Ole Cup gave me a safe space to learn these lessons firsthand and see opportunities to grow and solve problems where I hadn't before." — KATIE MYHRE '16

Aidan Schoff '21

Majors: Agribusiness and Spanish

Current Career: Hydroponic Lab Manager at Kingsborough Community College in New York City

Ole Cup Pitch: Gro-W-all, a compact, wall-mounted hydroponic system for home and classroom applications

"The Ole Cup was a great exercise in developing and refining some ideas I had been toying with for several years. While I am not in a product development role now, that focused exploration of hydroponic tech qualified me for my current role."

Katie Myhre '16

Major: Biology

Current Career: Business development for CIBO Technologies, where her role focuses on helping companies decarbonize their supply chains by incentivizing farmers to adopt regenerative agricultural practices

Malika Dale '16

Major: Biology

Current Career: Medical School and Health Care Startups

Ole Cup Pitch: RED Food, an online procurement platform that linked farmers interested in selling produce to buyers in metro restaurants



Malika Dale '16 (left) and Katie Myhre '16 (center) with Nett Hart, an organic farmer in Milaca, Minnesota. PHOTO BY CARINA LOFGREN '16

Marie-Simone Kadurira '20

Majors: Biology and Political Science

Current Career: Research and Communications Lead for the Accelerator for Gender Based Violence Prevention; founder of Vasikana Vedu

Ole Cup Pitch: Vasikana Vedu, an organization that uses a unique business model to address period poverty in sub-Saharan Africa and enable women to remain in school, work, and engaged in their communities

"Through the Ole Cup I learned that entrepreneurship may seem daunting, but it is indeed for everyone. The principles of entrepreneurship can be applied effectively in both for-profit and nonprofit contexts. If I could sell my idea for profit, then I could certainly make it work for the nonprofit sector as well."



Jess Landa '16

Major: Theater

Current Career: Brand/Media Strategist; Founder and Owner of LANE Floral

Ole Cup Pitch: Blue Dog Denim, which used a new sizing method for women's denim to offer 22 sizes, embracing a wide range of body types



"The Ole Cup solidified something I had long suspected — I love pitching! It became a specialty of mine while I worked in advertising and now is a large part of my floral business. Being able to identify and solve problems are amazing skills to have in the business world. Being able to articulate and sell them is just as important."

Jordan Oberholtzer '24

Major: Economics

Current Career: St. Olaf Student

Ole Cup Pitch: Whiskey Woods, a custom drink glass smoking kit that allows consumers to easily smoke their liquors and cocktails



"Connections are everything. After winning, I had many people reach out, and when I am this young it has been important to keep all doors open. You never know who will have another connection for you that can help a lot."



Kyle Obermann '14

Major: Political Science

Current Career: Conservation and adventure photographer, filmmaker, and writer who was based in China from 2014 to 2020, where he also was a personality on Chinese TV and a freelance consultant for a variety of environmental and carbon credit-related projects

Ole Cup Pitch: KO Photography, which focused on environmental and adventure photography in China

"Looking back at what I wrote in 2014, it's amazing to see what I described become precisely what I went on to do: work with some of the largest conservation groups in China, become sponsored by The North

Face, publish in magazines like National Geographic and Chinese National Geographic, become a judge for the environmental category of China's Outdoor Industry Annual Awards, and gain an audience of hundreds of thousands online in China who were interested in becoming more environmentally conscious. The rigorous and foreign process of planning for the Ole Cup helped me believe and see for the first time that what I wanted to do was logistically possible."

John Bruer '16

Majors: Economics and Physics

Current Career: Vice President of Operations for Solutran within Optum Financial (subsidiary of UnitedHealth Group), a health care financial technology platform and payments network that connects over 15 million members to thousands of retailers across the country

Ole Cup Pitch: U-Swap, a campus marketplace for students to buy and sell everything from textbooks to student housing that was launched to tens of thousands of students across Minnesota

"The Ole Cup presented an opportunity to pitch, which couldn't be more important in my career. From raising money from investors, to selling to new clients, to preparing for a senior executive meeting, or even landing that new job, finding the salient points that matter and communicating them with confidence is the key to success. The Ole Cup enabled me to do just that."



Nora Flynn '15

Major: Biology

Current Career: Agricultural Water Planning Specialist for the Colorado Water Conservation Board

Kate Seybold '15

Majors: Biology and Environmental Studies

Current Career: Farm to Institution Coordinator for the Minnesota Department of Agriculture

Ole Cup Pitch: Farming Forward, an organization that worked with farmers to test and prove alternative ways of growing crops profitably with less environmental impact

"Thanks to two summers of research alongside Professor of Biology Kathleen Shea, I had fallen in love with agroecology, and more generally agriculture and sustainable food production. I was fairly certain that I would go to graduate school for agroecology and stay on a research-focused career path. But participating in the Ole Cup encouraged me to think outside the box about how else I could channel my love for farming, sustainability thinking, and working alongside farmers into other careers outside of academia. That is the joy and beauty of a liberal arts education!" — KATE SEYBOLD '15

Jakob Otten '19

Major: Economics

Current Career: English Instructor with Gaba Corporation in Japan

Ole Cup Pitch: In 2017 Otten pitched Warble, an app that would allow users to stream music playing from their phone to any other phone with the app. In 2019 he returned with teammates Zhanat Seitkuzhin '22 and Michael Paredes '22 to pitch Foodle, a meal preparation social enterprise designed to provide steady supplies of food to community centers and provide meaningful employment opportunities to youth.

The Foodle team then entered their idea into the 2019 Hult Prize entrepreneurship challenge, competing against 200,000 applicants from more than 120 countries. They won the regional final in Boston and were among 40 finalists selected to spend five weeks in London participating in the Hult International Business School's accelerator program.



Jakob Otten '19 (right) pitched Warble in 2017, and he was joined in 2019 by Michael Paredes '22 (center) and Zhanat Seitkuzhin '22 (left) to pitch Foodle at the Ole Cup and the Hult Prize competition in Boston and London.

"The Ole Cup — and later the Hult Prize — fostered my entrepreneurial flame; I developed strong presentation, leadership, and personal accountability skills through the experience. Passion carried us further than I ever could have imagined. I'll never forget when the night before our final Hult Prize business pitch, an angel investor told us that even if things didn't work out with our pitch, we had something unique and special in our team dynamic and energy."

— JAKOB OTTEN '19

Michael Paredes '22

Majors: Political Science and Quantitative Economics

Current Career: Analyst at Citizenly, a tech startup founded to improve the experience of being a citizen and public servant

Ole Cup Pitch: In 2019 Paredes was part of the team that pitched Foodle. In 2020 he pitched Olacoral, a jewelry company creating wearable pieces from lionfish fins.

"I founded Olacoral in response to the lionfish invasion in the Caribbean, particularly on the Belize Barrier Reef. The lionfish have no natural predators and they have been destroying the reef at an alarming rate. I created Olacoral as a way to monetize the lionfish so we could give the reef a fighting chance. After we launched the business and learned more from our partners on the ground, we realized that jewelry is not the most efficient way to mitigate invasive species — eating them is! The lionfish is a tasty and nutritious white-meat fish, which led us to pivot our business into a seafood supply company offering fresh lionfish meat to restaurants and grocery stores across the United States. That turned out to be far more successful, and we rebranded ourselves to Netless Catch before being acquired by a Gener8tor portfolio company. All this was done in collaboration with multiple stakeholders across the Caribbean, including hundreds of fishermen and fisherwomen, and was a direct result of the support received by the Ole Cup."

NEW BUSINESS *IN* NEW ZEALAND

A study-abroad course in one of the world's most innovative countries provides Oles with powerful, hands-on lessons in entrepreneurship.

By Kari VanDerVeen





AT A BUSINESS INCUBATOR IN CHRISTCHURCH, New Zealand, this January, a class of St. Olaf College students eagerly participated in a design thinking exercise on the circular economy.

As they exchanged ideas back and forth on how to create a resilient economic system that is good for business, people, and the environment, they were led in discussion by a team of entrepreneurial experts that has supported the launch of 214 startups and raised more than \$112 million in capital.

Then the 23 St. Olaf students were given 30 minutes to create a business plan and pitch the idea to the group.

It was a powerful lesson in quickly developing, honing, and pitching entrepreneurial ideas, says Caleb Kaestner '24. And it was an experience that he enjoyed so much that he continued to evolve the idea he came up with in that moment, eventually pitching it at this year's Ole Cup student entrepreneurial competition on campus. He won first place and \$10,000 for his pitch of Sunsor, a proactive plant care system that uses data to simplify plant health and reduce waste.

"This was absolutely the best class for educating me in great depth on how to start a business," Kaestner says, noting that the hands-on learning experiences he had in New Zealand have helped him pave a clear path for the future. "I get to apply almost everything I have learned as part of a process that is taking me from idea creation to potentially building a company after college."

That's exactly what St. Olaf Entrepreneur in Residence and Director of Business and Management Studies Sian Christie hopes students take away from her *Innovation in New Zealand* course.

"Entrepreneurship is best taught through opportunities to practice and learn from others," she says. "Students often struggle with ambiguity and worry about not having the 'right' answer. In this course I try to stretch our students to get out of their comfort zones in a completely different and unique environment."

New Zealand is one of the most innovative countries in the world. According to the most recent *Global Entrepreneurship Monitor* report that included New Zealand, 18 percent of the adult population counted as entrepreneurs. Students in Christie's course study the ecosystems that support growth and entrepreneurship, and consider the key aspects that foster innovation.

"LIVING WITH AND TRAVELING WITH A GROUP OF AWESOME OLES GIVES ME AN OPPORTUNITY TO SEE MY HOME COUNTRY THROUGH THEIR EYES AND THINK OF NEW WAYS TO SUPPORT THEIR EDUCATION AND GROWTH. THE GEOGRAPHY IS SO DIVERSE IN SUCH A SMALL COUNTRY, SO WE HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO EXPLORE MOUNTAINS AND OCEAN WHILE LEARNING ABOUT THE CULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES."

— SIAN CHRISTIE, *St. Olaf Entrepreneur in Residence and Director of Business and Management Studies*

Meghan Walsh '25 hikes toward her classmates at Aoraki/Mount Cook National Park during the *Innovation in New Zealand* course.
PHOTO BY JULES FROMM '25



Above: The Oles at the Dunedin train station on their first full day in New Zealand.

Below: The class at the Ministry of Awesome in Christchurch, where they worked with digital and innovation manager Andy Blackburn (far right) on a design thinking exercise and pitched business ideas.





“The goal is that the students will consider ways in which they can bring this innovative way of thinking back to the U.S. or wherever home is for them,” Christie says.

Tyler Rice '17 did exactly that. A political science major at St. Olaf with concentrations in management and Nordic studies, he took the *Innovation in New Zealand* course his senior year. After graduation he worked as a consultant for UnitedHealthcare and then participated in Stanford University’s Idea-to-Market Incubator, where for the next six months he created a business case for digital wellness at both workplaces and schools. He went on to co-found the Digital Wellness Institute and earn his master’s degree at New York University’s Wagner School of Public Service. Of all of those experiences, he says the St. Olaf course he took with Christie stands out.

“Going to New Zealand and studying innovation there, I learned as much in that class as I did in the Stanford incubator and even some of my graduate-level courses at NYU,” Rice says. “It really prepared me to be an entrepreneur.”

Students in the *Innovation in New Zealand* January term course spend the month traveling the length of the country, from Dunedin to Auckland. This year they visited three business incubators and heard from eight guest speakers with a wide range of expertise.

Andy Blackburn is a digital and innovation manager who ran the design thinking exercise the class participated in at the Ministry of Awesome in Christchurch, an incubator for high-growth startups and innovators. This is the third year he’s worked with the *Innovation in New Zealand* course, and he says he’s enjoyed seeing St. Olaf students define and understand a diverse set of problems and then work to create exciting, novel, and relevant solutions.

“I have been impressed with the students’ abilities and also their keenness to get involved and learn innovation by giving it energy and commitment,” he says. “The resulting pitches were lots of fun, and some real opportunities were created.”

As they traveled the country, the class visited sites that provided an opportunity to explore and discuss many of the key economic drivers of the country, from tourism and the film industry to farming and technology. Students also learned how the Māori culture and traditions are an important and significant part of the overall culture of the country. They

heard from indigenous entrepreneurs and visited important cultural sites and regions — Kaikoura and Rotorua, in particular, have iwi (tribal nation)–run businesses that explain and celebrate the Māori traditions, Christie notes.

The course concluded with a “hackathon” where students had 24 hours to compete in teams to come up with a new venture. Jean-Luc Collette '25, Anna Grace '26, and Joshua Sansom '25 brought the idea they developed back to campus and pitched it during this year’s Ole Cup.



Left: The Oles begin a tour of St. Paul’s Cathedral in central Dunedin. The *Innovation in New Zealand* course is open to students of all majors, and this year’s class included Oles majoring in computer science, economics, quantitative economics, mathematics, biology, German, environmental studies, political science, chemistry, music, psychology, race and ethnic studies, English, and film and media studies. “Having all these different perspectives and backgrounds enriches the learning experience and supports creative thinking,” says program leader Sian Christie.

ST. OLAF COURSES THAT SUPPORT ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Oles have access to a wide range of classes across disciplines that help sharpen entrepreneurial skills, including:

ID 229: Arts Management
BUS 210: Organizational Storytelling
BUS 237: Managerial Accounting
BUS 250: Marketing
BUS 251: Management
BUS 252: Legal Aspects of Business
BUS 260: Innovation in New Zealand (Study Abroad)
BUS 268: Design Thinking and Entrepreneurship
BUS 281: Corporate Finance
BUS 383: Management Policy and Strategy
ECON 245: Healthcare Economics
CSCI 241: Hardware Design
CSCI 251: Software Design and Implementation
CSCI 263: Ethical Issues in Software Design
CSCI 284: Mobile Computing Systems
PHYS 160: Engineering Design
ART 228: Animated Art
ENGL 285: Digital Rhetorics and New Media Literacies
ENGL 287: Professional and Business Writing
ENGL 289: Journalistic Writing
ENGL 290: Exploring Literary Publishing
ENGL 291: Intermediate Creative Nonfiction Writing
ENGL 296: Screenwriting
ENGL 373: Advanced Creative Nonfiction Writing Workshop

The experience in New Zealand was a perfect fit for Fiona Bošković '25, a computer science major with a business and management studies concentration. She has spent three summers as a technical program manager intern at Microsoft for AzureML in the Cloud and AI Division, and she will continue her work in the company's AI services after graduation.

"I recently pivoted from working as a software engineer to technical program management. Throughout our class in New Zealand we learned a lot about innovation, including creating our own product ideas and pitching them to others, and I really enjoyed the overall process of this work — which helped confirm that I made the right decision in my career shift," Bošković says.

Jules Fromm '25, a biology and environmental studies major, says the class pushed her to use a different set of skills and way of thinking.

"I learned a lot of networking and communication skills, and was able to sharpen my ability to simplify complex ideas," she says. Although she's not sure she'll ever become an entrepreneur, she knows the course's key takeaways can apply to a wide range of fields — including the career she plans to pursue in science. "My experience with this class was amazing," she says. 🍷



As students in the *Innovation in New Zealand* course traveled the length of the country exploring entrepreneurship, they also took time to have fun and form friendships.

Skiing to a Three-Peat

As America rediscovers cross-country skiing, St. Olaf continues to excel in the sport, with the women's Nordic skiing team claiming its third consecutive USCSA national championship this year.

BY FENTON KRUPP '24

When the Cross-Country Skiing World Cup was held in Minneapolis in February — the first time the event was held on U.S. soil in 20 years — it brought renewed attention to the sport. Cross-country skiing has long been dominated by non-Americans, but the sport is growing rapidly in the U.S. As the sport's popularity rises, the St. Olaf women's Nordic skiing team is rising right along with it, powered by back-to-back-to-back national championships.

In March, the St. Olaf women's Nordic skiing team claimed the overall team title at the United States Collegiate Ski and Snowboard Association (USCSA) National Championships for the third year in a row. The Ole women also captured the USCSA President's Award for combined performances in Nordic and alpine skiing for the third consecutive year.

Even with an abnormally small snowfall this year — this winter, Northfield saw less than a foot of snow compared to the area's average of more than four feet — the team has been hard at work, including a twice-a-week commute to the Twin Cities to train on machine-made snow. That hard work has paid off. Over the past three years, the St. Olaf women's Nordic skiing team has won nine of the 11 team events held at the USCSA National Championships.

This success has been driven by the stellar performances of Lily Hubanks '25 and Amae Kam-Magruder '27.

"The team has grown a lot in the past few years," says Hubanks, who just picked up her fifth USCSA individual national title at this year's National Championships. "It's such a fun community to be a part of."

While Nordic skiing is in many ways an individual sport, the tight-knit St. Olaf team works together to perform at a high level.

"You want your team to do just as well as you do," says Kam-Magruder, who just won her first USCSA individual national title at the National Championships. "The team is just so fun to race with."

Head Nordic Ski Coach Kevin Brochman, who previously coached Olympic gold medalist Jessie Diggins, has helped build the community that drives the team's success. "This team is so close," he says. "They eat together, train together, study together, and win together."

The rise of St. Olaf's Nordic program mirrors the growing popularity of cross-country skiing nationwide, especially after showcase events like the recent World Cup stop in Minneapolis. With talented skiers like Hubanks and Kam-Magruder leading the way, the future is bright for St. Olaf and American cross-country skiing. 🏔️



Lily Hubanks '25



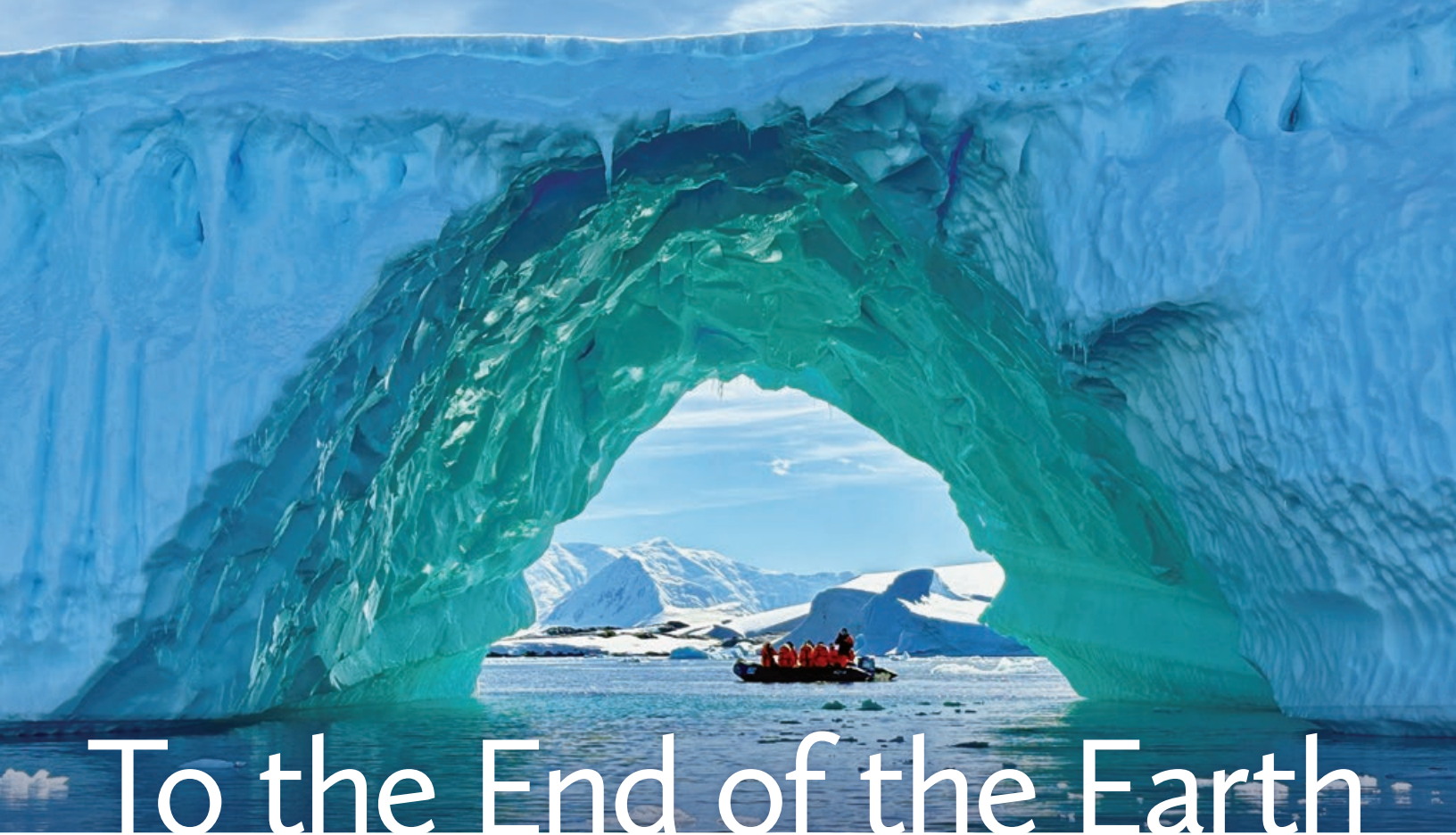
Amae Kam-Magruder '27



St. Olaf skiers Lily Hubanks '25 (right) and Amae Kam-Magruder '27 (left) in the lead at a race at Mt. Ashwabay in Bayfield, Wisconsin.



Ava Rothe '27 competes at the USCSA National Championships in Lake Placid, New York.



To the End of the Earth

By Kari VanDerVeen | Photographs by participants in the St. Olaf Alumni and Family Travel 2024 *Journey to Antarctica* program

Traveling to Antarctica is an unforgettable experience. But traveling to Antarctica with a researcher so acclaimed that he has a glacier on the continent named for him? That's a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

And that's exactly what a group of Oles did in January as part of a 13-day trip hosted by St. Olaf Alumni and Family Travel. The journey to Antarctica was led by St. Olaf Professor Emeritus of Physics and Environmental Science Bob Jacobel and his daughter, Middlebury College Assistant Professor of Earth and Climate Sciences Allison Jacobel.

Bob Jacobel was a member of a research team in western Antarctica that made history — and international headlines — for successfully drilling through 800 meters of ice to reach a subglacial lake. The 30-mile-long Jacobel Glacier is named in honor of the more than four decades he has spent on ground-based radar and ice core studies in Antarctica.

Now Jacobel is using his deep expertise about the white continent to give others a first-hand look at its majesty and fragility. This past January he led 26 St. Olaf travelers aboard the *National Geographic Explorer*

expedition ship for a tour of the world's last great wilderness. The program included sightings of humpback whales, orcas, seals, and several species of penguins. The travelers kayaked in protected waters, hiked on magnificent mountains, and even did a polar plunge into the frigid ocean waters.

The most magical part, though, was the ice. As the ship crossed the Drake Passage and ventured into channels and coves framed by towering peaks, they saw icebergs the size of several city blocks in stunning shades of white, blue, and green.

"A lot of people have the notion that the primary thing you're going to be amazed by is the wildlife, but what we really hear most 'ooohs' and 'aahhs' about is the spectacular ice formations that make up Antarctica," says Jacobel, who has now led five tours of the continent.

Carrie Warder Bartlett '79 signed up for the St. Olaf Alumni and Family Travel excursion because she knew from experience that traveling with Jacobel would be a deeply educational adventure. Bartlett and another Antarctica traveler, Bill Vernon '79, both went on the Global Semester program that Jacobel led as a young St. Olaf faculty member in 1978 with his wife, Pam.

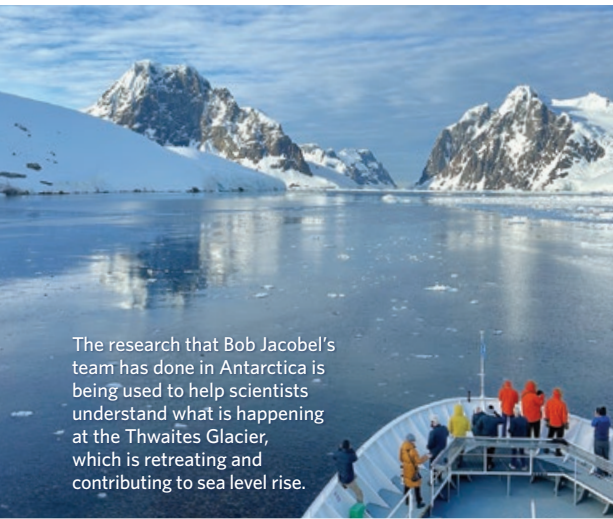
"It was full circle for both of us," says Bartlett. Her list of highlights from Antarctica is long: spectacular vistas, varied landscapes, raw nature, a wake-up call for a penguin siting, and a zodiac boat ride with the "whale whisperer." Those experiences, combined with the readings and lectures the Jacobels shared, impressed upon Bartlett how important it is to protect the continent from its biggest threat. "Global warming and the fragility of our Earth is real, and we need to heed the environmental warnings," she says.

Jacobel notes that the Antarctic Peninsula the group visited is experiencing the greatest climate change on the planet right now. And while first-time visitors to the continent might not have the comparison point to see the dramatic change the area has undergone over the past few decades, he does — and sharing that knowledge is an important part of why he leads these tours.

"It is incumbent on those of us who have been fortunate enough to share in this experience to do everything possible to support policies that preserve Antarctic species and the environment," Jacobel says. 🌱



The tail fin of a humpback whale.



The research that Bob Jacobel's team has done in Antarctica is being used to help scientists understand what is happening at the Thwaites Glacier, which is retreating and contributing to sea level rise.



"During [the 1978] Global Semester there were two activities I did not participate in, and I always regretted it," says Carrie Warder Bartlett '79. "The first was jumping off a bridge in Alexandria, Egypt. I swam out but was too chicken to jump off. The second one was not sliding down a marble slide at Taroko Gorge in Taiwan. Bob later wrote an article about our semester, and a picture of folks going down the slide was on the cover of the journal! So on our Antarctica trip, I did the Polar Plunge and felt that my previous regrets had been redeemed."



An orca surfacing.



A gentoo penguin and two chicks.



Allison and Bob Jacobel led the St. Olaf Antarctica trip.



Program participants included (L-R) Sandra Joubert, Brenda Kragseth, Allison Jacobel, Nancy Raymond, James O'Connor, Laura Byrd, Susanne Olson '86, Don Johnson, Sever Peterson, Johannes Von Trapp, Lynne Peterson Von Trapp '68, Donna Walker, Bob Jacobel, Carrie Warder Bartlett '79, Bob Bartlett, Carol Johnson, Lisabet Summa, John Olson '79, Susan Gunderson '79, Bill Vernon '79, Dan Raether '79, Glenn Byrd, Phil Peterson '70, Doug Skrien '84, Donna Zimmerman '79, and Philip Ditmanson.

ALUMNI & FAMILY TRAVEL

St. Olaf Alumni and Family Travel helps you explore the world through active learning adventures alongside like-minded travelers. A few upcoming programs are listed below. Learn more at stolaf.edu/travel.

Sicily and Malta | September 22–October 5, 2024

Led by Karen and Gary Wilkerson

South Korea and Taiwan | November 6–20, 2024

Led by Karil Kucera and Daniel Jones

Galápagos | February 22–March 1, 2025

Led by Dave and Pat Van Wylene

Phoenix: Pre-50th Reunion Adventure

March 12–16, 2025 | Hosted by Megan Larrabee Nelson

Third Chapter Retreat | March 16–19, 2025

Led by Deanna Thompson

Costa Rica | March 28–April 7, 2025

Led by Donna McMillan and Steve Bayne

Budapest | May 8–19, 2025 | Led by Bruce Hanson

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

Judith Anderson Stoutland '54 ¹ died on Nov. 28, 2023, at the age of 91. After marrying Frederick Stoutland (d. 2011) the year after she graduated from St. Olaf, the couple lived first in New Haven, Conn., where their son David was born, and then in Hartford, Conn., where their daughters Andrea and Sara were born. The family moved to Northfield in 1962, where Judith joined her husband on the St. Olaf faculty; Frederick taught philosophy and she taught first-year English and English as a Second Language. Together they co-led Global and Far East Semesters. She spent sabbaticals in Finland, England, and Mexico, and was a loyal member of the Margaret Evans Book Club. She is remembered as "a vocal supporter of human rights and peace issues as well as a multi-talented, enthusiastic organizer and doer. She was active in the League of Women Voters, St. John's Lutheran Peace Fellowship, and the Nobel Peace Prize Forum." She is survived by her children, David, Andrea, and Sara (Eric Hazen); grandchildren, Irene, Raffaella, Celina, Elizabeth, Nathan, and Rebecca; and sisters, **Solveig Anderson Halbakken '53** and **Rachel Anderson Knudsen '64** (John Knudsen '62). ■ **Jane Jacobson Gelle '54**, age 91, died on March 14, 2024. Following her sophomore year at St. Olaf, Jane married her Osakis, Minn., high school sweetheart, Robert (Bob) Gelle, in 1952. They moved to the East Coast while Bob served in the U.S. Army, and settled in Northfield in 1957 when Bob became a professor of physical education and head basketball coach at St. Olaf. Jane raised their four children while continuing her St. Olaf education, graduating in 1967 with degrees in education and English. She went on to earn her master's degree in special education from the University of Oregon in 1980. She was a much-loved middle school teacher with the Northfield Public Schools and taught for 25 years until her retirement in 1993. Known for her enthusiasm, optimism, and generosity with her time and talents, Jane, along with Bob (d. 2018), served the community, St. Olaf, and St. John's Lutheran Church in Northfield in many capacities. She belonged to the Northfield Hospital Auxiliary, and enjoyed working at their annual book sale. She is survived by her children, **Mark Gelle '76** (Claudia Miller '80), **Nancy Gelle '77**, **Fredric Gelle '81** (Debra Gelle), and **Susan Gelle Nelson '83** (Scott Nelson '83); grandchildren **Andrea Gelle '07** (Moriah Novacinski '14), **Matthew Nelson '09** (Jessica Nelson '09), **Maren Gelle Henderson '10** (Paul Henderson '11),

Jessica Nelson Burns '11 (Jacob Burns), **Elizabeth Gelle Huppertz '12** (Mike Huppertz), **Nathan Gelle '15**, **Molly Nelson Britson '15** (Jared Britson '15), **Hannah Gelle Biedscheid '15** (Luke Biedscheid), and Amy Gelle Heraly (Thomas Heraly); and great-grandchildren Camden, Otto, Penelope, August, Margot, Birdie, Tula, Audrey, Arlo, and Bergen.

1960s

Dale Sorenson '61 writes, "Having 'retired' years ago, and started a new business of appraising used and rare books, maps, autographs, and prints, I ended that occupation and currently am selling used and rare books, [which] for me is fun rather than work."

1970s

Jim Smith '74 has been a visiting professor at the University of Alabama School of Law, Tuscaloosa Ala., during spring semester 2024. ■ **Mären Schmidt DeLaitch '76** writes, "I met a classmate on campus to catch up on our lives, and we cruised through the St. Olaf Bookstore — where I was amazed to find this sweatshirt!" ² She took a photo of the bookstore sweatshirt, which, she says, bears a remarkable resemblance to another St. Olaf sweatshirt that belonged to her mother, the late **Rhoda Skindlov Schmidt '43**. ■ **Mary Satre Kerwin '77** was elected president of the Colorado Nurses Association (CNA), the largest professional association in Colorado, in October 2023. ³ She also serves as co-chair of CNA's Government Affairs and Public Policy Committee, which examines and promotes legislation to support nursing and advance health care in Colorado.

■ **Elizabeth Dimick Hofeldt '78** is one of three Ole violinists who recently performed Wagner's *Das Rheingold* with the Dayton Opera in Ohio, where she was joined by **Liam Gibb '17** and **Clara Brown '21**. ⁴ All three earned graduate degrees at the Cincinnati Conservatory, and are pictured together in the orchestra pit of the Schuster Center. ■ **Sarah Linner Quie '78** and **Sarah Steichen Stiles '08** would like Oles to know that their dance studio, Prairie School of Dance, is making a new home for itself in Chanhassen, Minn. ■ **Mark Brauer '79** retired in October 2022 and writes, "[I] sold everything and with my wife, Susan, moved to Ho Chi Minh City in October 2023. ⁵ Just spent our first TET in Vietnam. Spectacular! Year of the Dragon, so dragons everywhere and fireworks on New Year's Eve. Reach out if you get to Vietnam." ■ **Tamar Ulrich DeJong '79**, who is married to Ole **Bruce DeJong '81**, brings her classmates up to date, writing, "We have worked in rural India since 1990 — Bruce as a general practitioner in a low-income outpatient clinic, and me as the founder and manager of a nonprofit social enterprise, instilling dignity and self-realization to marginalized women. Recently we started working four months out of the year in Madagascar, where I grew up. Bruce is conducting continuing education mini-courses for Malagasy doctors, and I am working in one of the worst prisons in Madagascar. The conditions are abysmal, and decryed by Amnesty International. In March of 2023 I teamed up with three Malagasy colleagues. We hired a local construction company and spearheaded renovations funded by Friends of Madagascar Mission to make life a bit more humane. But it was a drop in the bucket, and much more needs to be done."





Diane Jacobsen Dickmeyer '79 writes that the day before she brought her mom, **Joen Mattila Jacobsen '53**, to St. Olaf for her 70th Reunion in 2023, they celebrated with three generations of Ole family and friends at the wedding of her son, **Jason Dickmeyer '19** to **Abby Schilling Dickmeyer '19**. Joen Jacobsen is pictured behind the bride and groom, with Diane Dickmeyer to her right and standing next to her daughter, **Laura Dickmeyer Carlton '12**. Other Oles in the photo include **Sammy Kroner '20**, **Neetij Krishnan '20**, **Will Hedderich '20**, **Maria Kloiber '20**, **Harry Skalski '20**, **Erik Collet '20**, **Danica Meier '20**, **August Carpenter '19**, **Cailan Carpenter '17**, **Deb Maas Bergstrand '79**, **Thor Henderson '19**, **Kayla Carlson '19**, **Josie Zimmerman '19**, **Leif Jorgensen Duus '19**, **Jack Welsh '19**, **Marissa Wolff '20**, **Ben Seidel '18**, **Kaeli Welsh '19**, **Jacob Cabbage '19**, **Robyn Doughty '18**, **Erik Kuehl '18**, **Collin Scott '19**, and **Janel Wegner Dennen '79**.

1980s

Durk Peterson '83 writes, "After 30 years of service as an ELCA pastor and three years as a Thrivent Financial advisor, [I] accepted a senior Premier Banking position at Wells Fargo's downtown Shakopee, Minn., branch." ■ **Justin Stets '85** has been named CEO of Carlson Capital Management, a Minnesota-based investment advisory and integrated wealth management firm. Stets has been with the firm since 1998, and previously served as president. He assumes the CEO role from **Gregory Carlson '82**, who continues to serve the company as chairman of the board and is actively engaged in the firm as a co-founder alongside **Jeffrey Carlson '83**. "Justin tirelessly and passionately works to advance our goal of enriching the lives of clients and colleagues, bringing wisdom and purpose to wealth," Greg Carlson says. "With Justin at the helm, we will extend our circle of care, and continue growing to serve more clients with intentionality, clarity, and expertise." ■ **Jennifer Redmann '89**, a professor of German and department chair at Franklin & Marshall College, was elected national president of the American Association of Teachers of German for 2026-27.

1990s

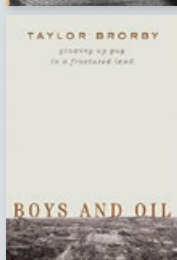
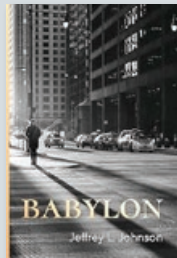
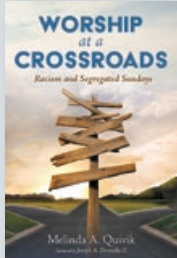
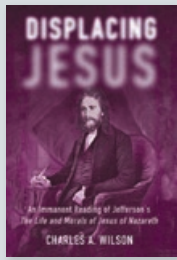
Martha Kunau '90 writes, "Magnum Chorum, a Twin Cities choir founded in the St. Olaf choral tradition in 1991, toured in Norway and Sweden in June 2023. ❶ Here you see Oles from the trip standing in front of the grave of St. Olaf College founder B.J. Muus on the grounds of Nidaros Cathedral in Trondheim, Norway." Pictured, L-R: **Sara Kunau '92**, **Kate Burke Mortensen '94**, **Troy Loken '90**, **Nathan Oppedahl '87**, **Deanna Loken '90**, **Karen Miller Lutgen '02**, **Olivia Snortland Monson '14**, **Amanda Balgaard '12**, **Mark Oppedahl '85**, **Kevin Bailey '89**, **Erica Hollom '99**, **Michael Lenz '10**, **Renee Dirks May '90**, **Rich May '87**, **Mason DeGrazia '22**, **Martha Kunau '90**, **Peter Haugen '90**, **Mark Schneider '77**, **Kim**

Bowman '88, **Emma May '22**, **Emma Jenks '22**, **Emily Chmielewski '20**, and **Keith Lutgen '99**. ■ **Jane K. Dickinson '90** is the 2024 president of the Association of Diabetes Care & Education Specialists, and has served on its Board of Directors since 2020. ■ **Sarah Fanning Armstrong '92** was promoted to partner at the law firm Faegre Drinker. Armstrong advises high net worth individuals and closely held corporate entities to manage their wealth through estate planning, estate and trust administration, and implementation of succession planning. ■ **Lolita King-Bethel '92** was honored with the John M. Taborn Award for Outstanding Contributions to Psychology by a Person of African Descent. The Minnesota Psychological Association

gives this award to recognize sustained or special contributions to the field of psychology. King-Bethel is a supervising clinical psychologist with the Hennepin County Medical Center. ■ **Brandon Lawhead '93** has been named to the Austin High School Music Hall of Fame. A lawyer in Austin, Minn., he has played his violin with the Minnesota Orchestra, The Who, Marvin Hamlisch, The Moody Blues, and many other noted musicians. He also initiated the MacPhail School of Music's partnership in Austin. A member of the St. Olaf Orchestra during his time at St. Olaf, Lawhead was selected as one of eight finalists in the Minnesota Orchestra's Young People's Concert Association Competition and won recognition as the top violinist. He notes that his success is possible thanks to the support of many music mentors and his family, which includes his wife, **Jennifer Heimkes Lawhead '93**; son, **Brockdon Lawhead '23**; and daughter, **Tammara Lawhead '26**. ❷ Brandon is pictured with Brockdon (left) and retired St. Olaf Orchestra Conductor Steven Amundson. ■ **Matthew Biorn '95** has founded Botho Corps Trust, a nonprofit organization registered in Botswana. Soon after graduation, Biorn served as a volunteer in the U.S. Peace Corps as an English and art teacher in Botswana, where he has lived for more than 20 years. A fluent speaker of the local language, Setswana, Biorn is chair of Botho Corp's Board of Trustees, striving to help address the needs of local underserved communities. He co-founded the trust with his wife, Didi Biorn, a doctor of clinical psychology, in 2022 in response to the needs of their neighbors in the rural village of Boro, a small community of roughly 150 families living as subsistence farmers outside the tourist town of Maun. ❸ The Trust has assessed, identified, and addressed myriad needs of the community, including a bus program, learning activities, youth sports and wellness camps, and access to water, solar power, and mental health services.



On the Shelf



BOOKS BY ST. OLAF COLLEGE ALUMNI, FACULTY, AND STAFF

Amazing Grace: A Journey of Self-Discovery (Wipf and Stock, 2023), by **Vernon J. Bittner '54**

Beyond Barron: A Memoir (Sunbury Press, Inc., 2024), by **Daniel E. Van Tassel '62**

The Companion Guide to The Golden Bough, A Fairytale Ballet for Children (Amazon, 2023), by **Wilor Bluege '65**

Displacing Jesus: An Immanent Reading of Jefferson's "The Life and Morals of Jesus of Nazareth" (Cascade Press, 2024), by **Charles A. Wilson '69**

The 1963 Chicago Bears: George Halas and the Road to the NFL Championship (McFarland Publishing, 2023), by **Charles N. Billington '70**

Journeying Home (BookLocker, 2023), by **Barbara Kilde Carlier '71**

Worship at a Crossroads: Racism and Segregated Sundays (Cascade Books, 2023), by **Melinda A. Quive [Quie] '72** and Joseph A. Donnell II

Bach's St. John Passion for the Twenty-First Century: Musical and Theological Perspectives (Rowman & Littlefield, 2023), by Michael Fuchs, **Bradley Jensen '78**, et al.

Breathing in Minneapolis (Finishing Line Press, 2023), by **Patrick Cabello Hansel '75**

Contingent Faculty and the Remaking of Higher Education: A Labor History (University of Illinois Press, 2024), edited by **Eric Fure-Slocum '79** and Claire Goldstone. This includes the essay, "The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly: Being Contingent and Female in STEM Fields," by St. Olaf Associate Professor of Practice in Biology **Diane Angell**

Babylon (Fernwood Press, 2023), by **Jeffrey L. Johnson '81**

Exchange of Ideas: The Economy of Higher Education in Early America (University of Chicago Press, 2023), by **Adam R. Nelson '93**

Capital of Mind: The Idea of a Modern American University (University of Chicago Press, 2024), by **Adam Nelson '93**

Forging Bonds in a Global Workforce (McGraw Hill, 2024), by Andy Molinsky and **Melissa Hahn '04**

Boys and Oil: Growing Up Gay in a Fractured Land (Liveright, 2022), by **Taylor Brorby '10**

Smoke On the Waterfront: The Northern Waters Smokehaus Cookbook (University of Minnesota Press, 2023), by Northern Waters Smokehaus [**Ned Netzel '13**]

Sitcom Mom: The Evolution of a Classic Television Character (Lexington Books, 2023), by **Judy Kutulas**, professor emerita of history, film and media studies, and gender and sexuality studies at St. Olaf College

■ **Chris Strom '95** and **Isaiah Scharen '20** teamed up to design a cheery yellow Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) that was recently featured in the print edition of *Dwell*, one of the top architecture magazines in the country.

1 The dwelling, a fun structure dubbed Sunflower, has received multiple awards for its sustainability and design.

What's even more fun is the very Ole way this design came about. Strom, the founder and principal architect of Christopher Strom Architects, taught a pre-architecture class at St. Olaf four years ago that included Scharen. Strom was so impressed with Scharen's work that he hired him for a summer internship. Scharen's mom was so impressed with her son's internship work that she asked the firm to design a small "second home" for the family's backyard. Scharen spent his next internship working alongside Strom to develop the Sunflower dwelling. ■ **Fredrik Carlgren '97** has been designated as one of the 2024 Top Retail Experts by RETHINK Retail. This prestigious award is a testament to Calgren's outstanding contributions to the retail technology field and significant role in steering the retail industry's future. ■ **Kathryn Medlin Russell '99** has joined the Minnesota Attorney General's Office as its first training and development manager.

2000s

Jen Randolph Reise '00 was honored as one of *Minnesota Lawyer's* 2023 Top Women in Law and was profiled in the *Minneapolis Star Tribune* for her work as an attorney and head of business and cannabis law at North Star Law Group. "I'm building a practice at North Star that serves cannabis entrepreneurs and small businesses, helping them stay in compliance with our new laws," she told *Minnesota Lawyer*. "I'm having a lot of fun right now. It's complicated, so I like helping them navigate that." ■ **John Tracy '00** writes, "I started my new role within the Medical Solutions Division of 3M's Healthcare Business Group. In this position I'll be managing and improving our commercialization process, enabling our amazing teams to develop new products used in various in-patient and out-patient environments." ■ **Catherine Kay Brown '01** writes, "After 14 years as a private voice teacher, I have taken a position as adjunct professor of music (voice) at Immaculata University." In November the *Journal of Voice* published her article titled "Effects of an 8-Week Mindfulness Course in People With Voice Disorders," which highlights the results from her study showing that the course "shows promise for reducing stress in people with



[voice disorders], lowering voice handicap, and improving quality of life." She has presented her work at the Voice Foundation's Annual Symposium in Philadelphia, the 2023 Pan-American Vocology Association (PAVA) Symposium, and at workshops for Dysphonia International and the National Association of Teachers of Singing (NATS) Eastern Regional Conference. She is currently collaborating with the University of Miami's Voice Center on several research projects related to voice and mindfulness. ■ **Kristie Kiesel '01** was certified as a functional diagnostic nutrition practitioner in June 2023. ■ **Jay Larsen '01**, president of Prime Security Bank in Shakopee, Minn., and **Christie Larson '04**, executive director of Southern Valley Alliance, have partnered together in a unique private sector and nonprofit collaboration to build a new Domestic Abuse Advocacy Center in Shakopee, Minn. The center will provide critical domestic violence services to Scott and Carver county residents, including a 24/7 crisis line, safety planning, legal/court advocacy, support groups, and transitional housing. ■ **Claire Sanford '01** has fulfilled her 30+ year dream of becoming a firefighter, writing, "We had a house fire in the middle of the night when I was 12. I'd never been so grateful to see anyone as I was those firefighters. When allowed back in the house there were tons of [firefighters] milling around, and I noticed one woman. It stuck out both that there was a woman [firefighter], and that there was only one. Ever since I'd wanted to try and pay it forward." 2 Incredible thank you to **Brenda Berkman '73** and her landmark sex discrimination case to integrate the FDNY and pave the way for those like me. Unfortunately for my colleagues, firefighting will be nights/weekends. Keeping the day job as a lobbyist for child care quality and affordability." ■ **Abigail Wuest '01** and her husband, Brian Potts, were interviewed on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange about the index fund they launched called the Democratic Large-Cap Core Fund (ticker: DEMZ). Abigail describes the fund as "the S&P, without the GOP." ■ **Luke Anderson '02** was named chief financial officer of Colorado Enterprise Fund, a nonprofit financial institution whose mission is to accelerate community prosperity by

financing and supporting entrepreneurs and small businesses. ■ **Joel Vos '03** ① celebrated 10 years of employment with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, entering his third year as refuge manager of the Green Bay and Gravel Island National Wildlife Refuge. ■ **Jonathan Cornell '03** has been called to be the senior pastor of Shadle Park Presbyterian Church in Spokane, Wash. ■ **Kathy Cebuhar '03**, faculty instructor with the University of Colorado, has been promoted to associate program director of education and program development for the Department of Family Medicine Residency. ■ **Melissa Cruze Hahn '04** is teaching intercultural communication at American University's School of International Service and has written a new book about how to build professional relationships across cultures. *Forging Bonds in a Global Workforce* was published by McGraw Hill in February 2024. ■ **Alejandra Calderon Eppinger '06** is working as a pediatric provider and director at Southside Community Health Services and is excited to expand services to families by being the only clinic in Minnesota to be awarded an Early Childhood Development Grant by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA). ■ **Matthew Peterson '06** has been awarded two of Sweden's top honors in music composition. He received the Carin Malmföf-Forsling composer prize from the Royal Swedish Academy of Music last July. In awarding him the honor, the jury noted that "Matthew Peterson is an artist who finds inspiration where he stands, arriving at a music that leaves room for both musician and listener, a music that continues to sound even in silence." The award ceremony at the historic home of composer Hugo Alfvén (*Alfvengården*) featured excerpts from the St. Olaf Orchestra's 2021 performances of *Symphony No. 1 — The Singing Wilderness* and *Aurora*. ② In November 2023 Peterson was awarded Classical of the Year (*Årets Konstmusikpris*) by the Swedish Music Publishers Association (*Musikförläggarna*) for his cappella choral work, *An Inner Sky*. This was the first time an a cappella choral piece received the honor. *An Inner Sky* was commissioned as first prize in the inaugural Sven-David Sandström Choral Composition Award. ■ **Kari Bergeson Holden '07**, a speech-language pathologist, has, with Whitney Docken, opened Evergreen Therapy Solutions, a speech and language clinic in Northfield. Evergreen provides assessment and therapy in the wide-ranging areas of articulation/phonology, expressive/receptive language, pragmatics, voice, fluency, apraxia, cognitive communication, accent addition, reading intervention, AAC, and most recently, orofacial myofunctional evaluation and treatment. ■ **Karl Olson '08** recently launched a mental health medication management practice based on a new model of care. ■ **April Wright '09** was made assistant dean of science and technology at Southeastern Louisiana University in August 2023.

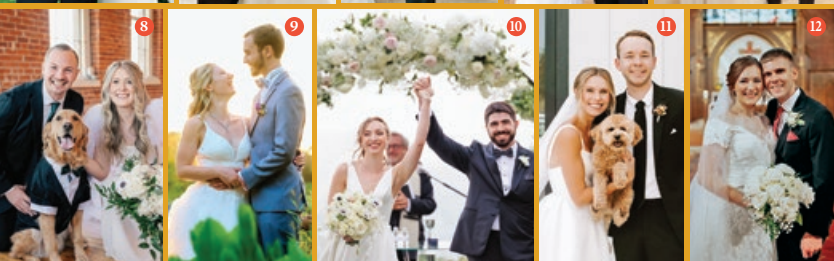
2010s

■ **Samuel Backman '10**, Minneapolis-based organist and composer, premiered his new four-movement symphony *Symfonia Kolęd* in January 2024. "This vivacious and stirring work quotes Polish Christmas carols extensively, and it was written to



honor the memory of Janusz Zorawski, an immigrant from Poland, and a beloved pillar in his community," Backman says. Since 2019 Backman has served as director of music at Holy Cross Catholic Church. He has won numerous awards and has been featured several times on American Public Media's *Pipedreams*. ■ **Taylor Brorby '10**, the author of *Boys and Oil: Growing Up Gay in a Fractured Land*, appeared on MSNBC's "Velshi Banned Book Club," a series rooted in literary and cultural analysis and in the notion of reading as resistance. ■ **Sarah Meisch-Lacombe '10** began a new position as an electronic resources librarian at Yale University. ■ **Timothy Otte '10** is one of four new co-owners of Wild Rumpus Books, a specialty children's bookstore located in the Linden Hills neighborhood of Minneapolis. ③ Specializing in children's and young adult literature, the store has been recognized nationally as the 2017 Bookstore of the Year by *Publishers Weekly* and internationally by readers of *O: The Oprah Magazine* and *The Guardian* as one of the best independent bookstores in the world. Founded in 1992 by Collette Morgan and Tom Braun, the new team of owners intends to steward the store into the next 30+ years, keeping the high standards of curation and customer service, as well as caring for the store's menagerie of animals (two cats, two chinchillas, a cockatiel, a dove, a gecko, and an aquarium of fish). ■ **Kayleen Seidl Hecksher '13** made her Broadway Debut in *Harmony: A New Musical* by Barry Manilow and Bruce Sussman playing at the Ethel Barrymore Theater. ④ She performed in the ensemble and understudied a leading role played by

Sierra Boggess. She also recently founded Moving Vocals Performance Studio, which provides integrated training of artistic skills and business strategy sessions for performers via one-on-one and group sessions. ■ **Megan Campbell '14** has completed her five-year residency at the University of Utah in orthopedics and has begun her fellowship in foot and ankle care at OrthoCarolina in Charlotte, N.C. She attended medical school at Rutgers University, and has been a Columbia University Pediatric Orthopedic Research Fellow, earned a Weiss & Lambert Medical Student Research Award (NJOA chapter), and was a N.J. Cancer Center Summer Research scholarship winner. OrthoCarolina is one of the nation's leading independent academic orthopedics practices serving the Southeast since 1922. ■ **Zach Rolfs '15** is directing the Harbor Sounds Chorus in Midland, Mich. He writes, "If you're in the area, we'd love to [see] you!" ■ **Christina Pauley '16**, who is with Penz Dental Care, owned by **Matthew Penz '08** and **Kate Olson Penz '08**, writes that they have been named "Best Dental Practice" in Rochester, Minn. ■ **Duncan Tuomi '16**, an associate conductor of the USC Thornton Apollo Chorus and award-winning composer based in Los Angeles, has won the American Prize for the college/university division competition for short choral works. The piece he submitted was *Second Coming*, a recording that he and his wife, Mande Light Tuomi, put together during COVID when choirs weren't meeting. ■ **McAllister Stephens '16** has earned her Ph.D. in cognitive neuroscience from the University of Kentucky. 🐾



Future Oles

Jenny Howenstine '98 and David Wagner '03, a son, Oliver ¹
 Elizabeth Lund '02 and Ryan Hughes, a son, Sebastian ²
 Elizabeth Braaten Palmieri '04 and William Palmieri '03, a daughter, Freya ³
 Matthew Peterson '06 and Sara Ekstrand, a son, Björn
 Carolyn Pearson Pierson '06 and Evan Pierson '06, a daughter, Frances
 Amanda Carson '07 and Zach Griffith, a daughter, Ramona
 Ben Clifford '08 and Julia Cai, a son, Brian
 Jeremy Gustafson '08 and Alissa Carsten, a daughter, Rosemary
 Sarah Van den Akker Kemen '08 and Grant Kemen '08, a daughter, Claire ⁴
 Sara Thatcher Swenson '09 and Matt Swenson, a daughter, Sophia
 Alex White Baxmeyer '11 and John Baxmeyer, a son, Lucca ⁵
 Mara Kumagai Fink Klein '11 and Garrett Klein '11, a son, Niko ⁶
 Morgan Smith '12 and Chase Liaboe '12, a son, Jude ⁷
 Amelia Stonesifer Yingst '12 and Evan Yingst, a son, Thomas ⁸
 Kristina Haugen Milne '13 and Steve Milne '11, a daughter, Annika ⁹
 Greta Hanson Aarsvold '14 and Andreas Aarsvold, a daughter, Annika
 Jeff Ruffatto '14 and Mandy Ruffatto, a daughter, Sola ¹⁰
 Marie Bak Walker '14 and Ramsey Walker '14, a daughter, Molly
 Emma Youngquist '15 and Brandon Berger '15, a daughter, Edith ¹¹
 Stephanie Kisch Anderson '16 and Brent Anderson, a daughter, Margot ¹²
 Annika Seager Heroux '21 and Andrew Heroux, a son, Peter ¹³

Weddings

Jonathan Cornell '03 and Jourdan Turner Cornell, April 11, 2021
 Lauren Melcher Meyer '08 and Derek Meyer, April 22, 2023 ¹
 Allison Johnson Kassen '12 and Allen Kassen, Sept. 8, 2023 ²
 Olivia Cooper Schneider '13 and Ben Schneider, July 1, 2023 ³
 Oliivia Snortland Monson '14 and Jonathan Monson, Oct. 6, 2023 ⁴
 Krista Bryz-Gornia '15 and Dain Brademan '15, Oct. 8, 2022 ⁵
 Sydney Mason Casey '16 and Christopher Casey '18, July 29, 2023 ⁶
 Claire Bents Steele '16 and Avi Steele '17, Sept. 29, 2023 ⁷
 Allie Solensten Kuss '17 and Sam Kuss '16, Nov. 18, 2023 ⁸
 Anya Fairchild '19 and Peter Cunniff '19, June 12, 2022 ⁹
 Morgan Krahmer Klein '19 and Jack Klein '19, Aug. 5, 2023 ¹⁰
 Amy Otteson Gorres '19 and Evan Gorres '19, Aug. 25, 2023 ¹¹
 Annika Seager Heroux '21 and Andrew Heroux, Sept. 17, 2022 ¹²

Deaths

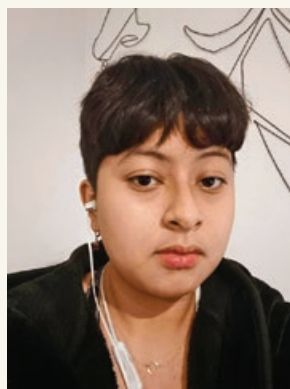
Ruth Ellefson Woodson '42, Avondale, Ariz., Jan. 4, 2024
 Solveig Slen Arnold '44, Kent, Wash., Jan. 18, 2024
 Ann Reitmann DiGennaro '45, Boulder, Colo., Dec. 15, 2023
 Betty Halvorson Caspar '46, St. Paul, Minn., Oct. 21, 2023
 Avis Larson Frethem '46, Minneapolis, Dec. 7, 2023
 Margaret Birkedal Luttio '46, Rancho Palos Verdes, Calif., July 14, 2023
 *Gustav Dinga '47, Edina, Minn., Jan. 24, 2024
 Dorothy Miller Hughes '47, Fort Dodge, Iowa, Jan. 24, 2024
 Valborg "Vallie" Myrland Parent '47, Silver Bay, Minn., Feb. 25, 2024
 *Donald "Don" Handahl '49, New London, Minn., Dec. 19, 2023
 *James "Jim" Johnson '49, Iowa City, Iowa, Oct. 8, 2023
 Maybelle "Pauli" Mattson Krieger '49, Rochester, Minn., Jan. 26, 2024
 Elizabeth "Betty" Schultz Loftsgard '49, Oskaloosa, Iowa, Nov. 25, 2023
 Edith Tuftedal Marsh '49, Tucson, Ariz., Oct. 27, 2023
 Solveig Overby Tschann '49, Mendota Heights, Minn., Dec. 11, 2023
 Helen Ahle Turner '49, Basalt, Colo., June 6, 2023
 Deloris Krause Utke '49, Ripon, Wis., Sept. 29, 2023
 Carol Grau Vavrin '49, Racine, Wis., Nov. 6, 2023
 Boyd Holtan '50, Core, W. Va., Dec. 12, 2023
 Margaret Ruble Houglum '50, Kenyon, Minn., Jan. 13, 2024
 Marjorie "Marge" Klomps Jerpak '50, Hopkins, Minn., Oct. 19, 2023
 Norman Schoening '50, Solebury, Pa., Aug. 12, 2022
 Gerald "Jerry" Williams '50, North Oaks, Minn., Nov. 30, 2023
 Barbara Strand Hemenway '51, Fort Collins, Colo., Feb. 17, 2023
 Joe Ann Rasmussen Henderson '51, Oconomowoc, Wis., Oct. 6, 2022
 *Leslie "Les" Mason '51, Brainerd, Minn., Dec. 31, 2023
 Mary Johnson Nelson '51, Wayzata, Minn., Oct. 17, 2023
 Elizabeth "Liz" Rygh Schroeder '51, Elbow Lake, Minn., Dec. 24, 2023
 Henrietta Holm Warwick '51, Minneapolis, Nov. 19, 2023
 Lorraine Stee Hartwig '52, Northfield, Minn., Nov. 21, 2023

- Taima Kert Nelson '52, Sun City West, Ariz., Dec. 28, 2023
 Carol Belsheim Nielson '52, Santa Fe, N.M., Oct. 19, 2023
 *Lowell Palmquist '52, Littleton, Colo., Aug. 25, 2023
 Marilyn Sandbo Stolee '52, Minneapolis, Feb. 3, 2024
 *Albert "Lee" Zander '52, Westfield, Mass., Sept. 30, 2023
 Owen Anderson '53, Allison Park, Pa., Aug. 5, 2023
 Phyllis Holmes Benson '53, Verona, Wis., Nov. 4, 2023
 *Arlen Erdahl '53, Prior Lake, Minn., Sept. 21, 2023
 Audrey Hetland Johnson '53, Springfield, Minn., Oct. 30, 2023
 Nancy Eidsvold Plecas '53, Alexandria, Minn., Dec. 13, 2023
 John Quam '53, Minneapolis, Oct. 4, 2023
 Elizabeth "Betty" Johnson Stromseth '53, Northfield, Minn., Oct. 15, 2023
 Geraldine "Gerry" Thompson '53, Dayton, Ohio, Nov. 2, 2023
 Nancy Conn Blom '54, Hartland, Wis., Dec. 2, 2023
 Judith Anderson Stoutland '54, Northfield, Minn., Nov. 28, 2023
 Joan Trebilcock Wilson '54, Miles City, Mont., Feb. 17, 2024
 *Lee Carlson '55, Sparks, Nev., Oct. 1, 2023
 Lois "Loey" Wold Christenson '55, Red Wing, Minn., Sept. 27, 2023
 Marian Amundson Lehman '55, Spokane, Wash., Nov. 5, 2023
 Roger Morse '55, Racine, Minn., Jan. 1, 2024
 *Donald "Don" Ostercamp '55, Champlin, Minn., Nov. 7, 2023
 Shirley Wilson Anderson '56, Northfield, Minn., Jan. 24, 2024
 Dewaine Erickson '56, Effingham, Ill., Nov. 13, 2023
 Robert Esse '56, Fairbanks, Alaska, Aug. 13, 2023
 *Chester "Chet" Hills '56, Hickory Corners, Mich., Jan. 13, 2024
 Robert "Bob" Jungas '56, Canton, Conn., July 23, 2023
 *Robert Lange '56, Windom, Minn., Oct. 6, 2023
 Alvin "Al" Lewis '56, Oak Park Heights, Minn., Jan. 24, 2024
 Harold "Hal" Nelson '56, Williamsburg, Va., Nov. 1, 2023
 Wilma Boothe Pell '56, Sun City, Ariz., Oct. 23, 2023
 Paul Peterson '56, Northfield, Minn., Jan. 17, 2024
 Geraldine "Gerri" Overland DeCorsey '57, Chaska, Minn., Nov. 13, 2023
 *Glen Stephens '57, Broomfield, Colo., June 13, 2022
 Darrell Thompson '57, Murray, Utah, Oct. 8, 2023
 Joan Von Ohlen '57, Kerrville, Texas, Dec. 11, 2023
 Miriam Berg Drangeid '58, Minnetonka, Minn., Dec. 1, 2023
 Calvin Frey '58, Birmingham, Ala., Nov. 12, 2023
 Donald "Don" Johnson '58, Chanhassen, Minn., Nov. 15, 2023
 Elaine "Jo" Rykken Johnson '58, Livermore, Calif., Sept. 1, 2023
 *Leonard "Len" Paulson '58, Sun Lakes, Ariz., Dec. 29, 2023
 *Paul Severson '58, Houston, Sept. 20, 2023
 Joyce Franze Olson '59, Lakeway, Texas, Oct. 16, 2023
 Mary "Mary Jo" Thorsheim '59, Minneapolis, Sept. 15, 2023
 Sonja Storvick Hagestuen '60, Aitkin, Minn., Jan. 9, 2024
 *Carl Ingvoldstad '60, Hidden Valley Lake, Calif., Aug. 27, 2023
 Donald Jurries '60, Houston, Dec. 17, 2023
 Rita Geppert Nelson '60, Spartanburg, S.C., Dec. 1, 2023
 Paul Rasmussen '60, Ann Arbor, Mich., Dec. 14, 2023
 *Ronald "Ron" Ringsven '60, Ottertail, Minn., Sept. 20, 2023
 Stephen Erickson '61, Claremont, Calif., Sept. 20, 2023
 *Richard "Dick" Lillquist '61, Willowbrook, Ill., Jan. 30, 2024
 Norma Baalson Marrion '61, Sioux Falls, S.D., Dec. 13, 2022
 *Laurence "Larry" Nerison '61, Adams, Minn., Sept. 18, 2023
 David Norrgard '61, Roseville, Minn., Jan. 7, 2024
 Alan Olson '61, Brewster, Mass., Sept. 14, 2023
 Bernadine "Bunny" Kvamme Armstrong '62, Elizabethtown, Pa., Oct. 22, 2023
 Kermit Hansen '62, Lake Crystal, Minn., Dec. 2, 2023
 Lowell Nelson '62, Salem, Ore., March 18, 2023
 Carolyn Opjorden Tande '62, Medford, Minn., Sept. 13, 2023
 Daniel "Dan" Kercher '63, Billings, Mont., Nov. 15, 2023
 Linda Peterson Laugen '63, Cedar Rapids, Iowa, Dec. 2, 2023
 *Van Miller '63, Faribault, Minn., Dec. 25, 2023
 David "Dave" Shoulberg '63, Greensboro, N.C., Feb. 11, 2024
 *Michael "Mike" Voxland '64, Fort Worth, Texas, Jan. 3, 2024
 Willis "Will" Bloedow '65, Madison, Wis., Feb. 27, 2024
 Kristine "Kris" Dahlen-Gemmill '65, Deerfield, Ill., Dec. 18, 2023
 Thomas "Tom" Heger '65, San Antonio, Jan. 31, 2024
 Ernest "Ernie" Mancini '65, Detroit Lakes, Minn., Dec. 15, 2023
 Carolyn Larson Thompson '65, Bend, Ore., Nov. 27, 2023
 *David "Dave" Dobratz '66, Minneapolis, Jan. 22, 2024
 Robert "David" Kummer '66, Los Angeles, Nov. 9, 2023
 Lillian Rolefson Nordin '66, Holmen, Wis., Oct. 17, 2023
 John Wagener '66, South Jordan, Utah, Jan. 10, 2022
 John "Tom" Ylvisaker '66, Redmond, Wash., Jan. 5, 2024
 Richard Anderson '67, Chicago, Nov. 17, 2023
 Helen Heins Peterson '67, Eau Claire, Wis., Jan. 14, 2024
 Carol Johnson Eggers '68, Excelsior, Minn., Sept. 25, 2023
 Nancy Brown Cihlar '69, Grand Marais, Minn., Jan. 7, 2024
 Diane Ronning Halbrook '69, Des Moines, Iowa, Sept. 15, 2023
 Raymond "Skip" Kenitzer '70, Salem, Ore., Sept. 25, 2023
 Deborah Nye-Corgan '72, York, Maine, Sept. 13, 2023
 Peter Reinertsen '72, Waterloo, Iowa, Jan. 8, 2024
 Laura Anders '73, Hopkins, Minn., Sept. 23, 2023
 Debbie "Deb" Boeder McFadden '73, Decatur, Ill., Sept. 15, 2023
 Robert "Bob" Anderson '74, Malvern, Pa., Sept. 23, 2023
 Sara Bufton-Rosen '74, Fairway, Kan., Jan. 25, 2024
 Thomas "Tom" Johnson '74, Morris, Minn., July 8, 2023
 Sherry Korsvik '74, Highland Park, Ill., June 20, 2023
 Robert Snortum '74, Sioux Falls, S.D., Nov. 18, 2021
 Michael "Mike" David '76, Cold Spring, Minn., Aug. 31, 2023
 Michele Rusinko '77, St. Peter, Minn., Jan. 22, 2024
 Victoria Johnson '78, Excelsior, Minn., Oct. 10, 2023
 Charles "Bob" Morrison '78, St. Paul, Minn., Feb. 11, 2024
 Daniel "Dan" Rostollan '79, Carlton, Minn., May 1, 2023
 Susan Lensink Panciera '82, Broken Arrow, Okla., Nov. 19, 2023
 Ruth Sylte '82, Minneapolis, Jan. 12, 2024
 Robert Johnson '83, Sioux City, Iowa, Jan. 5, 2024
 *Daniel Vojta '83, Hustisford, Wis., Jan. 28, 2024
 Pamela "Pam" Dedricks Byklum '84, Rochester, Minn., Dec. 30, 2023
 Brad Larson '84, Sharon, Mass., Nov. 2, 2023
 Carol Peterson '86, Mankato, Minn., Nov. 19, 2023
 Lynn Dornfeld '89, Iowa City, Iowa, Feb. 19, 2024
 Monthian Buntan '90, Samsennai, Phayathai, Bangkok, Thailand, March 2, 2024
 Yolanda Rainford '04, Kingston, Jamaica, July 11, 2023
 Brady Hanson '09, Minneapolis, Sept. 18, 2023
 Kaitlyn "Evie" Torres '24, Waukegan, Ill., Jan. 16, 2024

* VETERAN

Remembering Kaitlyn "Evie" Torres '24

Kaitlyn "Evie" Torres '24, of Waukegan, Ill., died on Jan. 17, 2024, at the age of 21. Torres was a kind, conscientious, caring individual who excelled in art and writing. Quiet, thoughtful, and introspective, Torres typically



needed a bit of time to warm up to people. After gaining comfort, though, Torres was an excellent confidant and a selfless friend who always put the needs of others first and foremost. All the while, Torres carried a wonderful sense of humor, a profound level of appreciation, and a smile that could lift everyone's spirits.

Torres was academically gifted and an active member of the Waukegan community who was recognized for community service efforts as a high school student. With a passion and

talent for the arts, Torres was commonly found in the mug library at St. Olaf working on a piece of art among fellow artists.

Torres will be deeply missed by friends and family, including mother Rosa Arnold; sibling Brianna Torres; and numerous uncles, aunts, and cousins. Torres was preceded in death by grandparents. Torres will be awarded a posthumous degree from St. Olaf during the 2024 Commencement Ceremony.

Remembering Robert (Bob) Entenmann

Professor Emeritus of History and Asian Studies Robert Entenmann died Jan. 7, 2024, of complications from Parkinson's disease. He was 74.

Entenmann earned a B.A. in Far Eastern Studies from the University of Washington, an M.A. in East Asian Studies from Stanford University in 1973, and a Ph.D. in history and East Asian Languages from Harvard University in 1982. While at Harvard he met and married Sarah Johnson, a Carleton College graduate, and together they moved to Northfield.

Entenmann joined the St. Olaf College faculty in 1982. The Asian Studies program was then in its infancy. He contributed to its development into a robust program with Japanese as well as Chinese classes, richer study abroad opportunities, and an interdisciplinary Asian Conversations program. He also was involved in setting up St. Olaf's exchange program with East China Normal University in Shanghai in the mid-1980s. His obituary recalls his "reputation for leading study abroad student and alumni groups to Asia (notably the 1995 Term in Asia, a monumental experience for him, his family, and his students); researching and writing on the social history of Chinese Christians during the Qing Dynasty, including analysis of the diary of a Chinese Catholic monk, Li Ande (Andreas Ly), in 18th century Sichuan; chairing the St. Olaf History Department several times; and serving as the faculty liaison of the Hmong Student Association for two decades. His research took him to archives in China, France, and the Vatican, his writing brought him international acclaim, and his service reverberated in academic associations."



Upon his retirement from St. Olaf in 2018 after serving for 36 years, Professor Emerita of Religion and Asian Studies Barbara Reed told *St. Olaf Magazine* that "Bob is one of those colleagues equally beloved by students and faculty. His colleagues respect his combination of quiet humility and the broadest knowledge of history ever seen on this campus. His students value his kindness and true interest in their lives. He has been an attentive faculty advisor to various student organizations, often attending events by groups such as Team Tibet and the Hmong student group. My favorite image of Bob will always be the photo of him gallantly riding a yak in Tibet."

Entenmann is survived by Sarah; their children, Leah and **David '11**; and his brother, Karl.

Remembering Anna Mooy

Visiting Assistant Professor Emerita of Music (voice) Anna Mooy died on Jan. 15, 2024, due to complications from a brain tumor. She was 65. Mooy, who was born in Salt Lake City, received her B.A. and M.A. degrees from Brigham Young University in voice education and vocal performance. Upon graduation, she moved to St. Paul to sing with the Dale Warland Singers. She studied for a doctoral degree in vocal performance at the

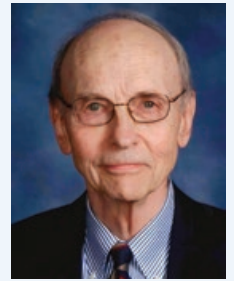


University of Minnesota and taught at several colleges and universities before joining the St. Olaf music faculty in 2014, where she taught music and voice. She retired in 2022. Through the years her beautiful mezzo soprano voice was heard in a variety of recital and concert halls, including Carnegie Hall, and she performed with the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra Choral, VocalEssence, and the Tabernacle Choir, among others. She also served as cantor in various Twin Cities churches.

Remembering Paul Peterson '56

Reverend Paul E. Peterson, the beloved, legendary director of WCAL from 1966 to 2000, died Jan. 17, 2024. He was 89.

Peterson graduated from St. Olaf in 1956 and attended Luther Seminary in St. Paul. He was ordained in 1960 and accepted calls to serve at Bethesda Lutheran Church in Ames, Iowa, and Trinity Lutheran Church in Linn Grove, Iowa. In 1966 he returned to St. Olaf to serve as the program director of WCAL, where he had worked during his undergraduate years. In 1974 he became general manager of WCAL, a role he served in until his retirement in 2000.



During his tenure at WCAL, Peterson led the development of the station during the growth of National Public Radio, of which WCAL-FM was a charter member. His leadership was considered visionary and consistent with his values of excellence in church, education, music, and social justice.

Choral singing was an important part of Peterson's life in high school, college, seminary, and WCAL. He sang in the St. Olaf Choir on its 1955 European tour, and he visited 20 parishes in northern Europe in 1960 as a member of Kristmenn, an eight-voice choir of seminary colleagues. He was a member of the church choir at St. John's Lutheran Church in Northfield for 43 years. Peterson was grateful for the opportunity to be, for many years, the host for myriad choral music programs that aired on WCAL — including the local and national radio broadcasts of the St. Olaf Christmas Festival. During his tenure at the radio station, Peterson acquired a reputation as the "voice of St. Olaf" to those who knew him as the on-air host of the Christmas Festival. His voice was unmistakable.

St. Olaf Director of Broadcast/Media Services **Jeffrey O'Donnell '02** worked at WCAL as a student during Peterson's last two years at WCAL. "He was the epitome of calm and cool under pressure. Quiet dignity combined with a passion for what WCAL could be and what it meant to St. Olaf College," remembers O'Donnell. "Of course, everyone remembers his voice. It was an unmistakably deep baritone that was both authoritative and welcoming."

Peterson continued to host the St. Olaf Christmas Festival radio broadcasts long after his retirement and the sale of WCAL, always with his usual outstanding professionalism and attention to every aspect of the concerts. He was also active in nonprofit organizations, serving terms as president of the Association of Minnesota Public and Educational Radio Stations (AMPERS), Northfield United Way, Rice County DFL, and St. John's Lutheran Church.

Peterson enjoyed nearly 60 years with his beloved **Deaun Sheggrud Peterson '57**, whom he met at St. Olaf in 1953 and married in Boe Chapel in 1957, and who preceded him in death. He is survived by his children, **Gregory Peterson '83** (Ann Sponberg), Khara Horning (Rob), **Timothy Peterson '88**; granddaughters, Leah and Halle Horning; sister, **Beatrice Friesth '54**; and several nieces and nephews.

Remembering Yakov Gelfand

St. Olaf Magazine received word that retired Assistant Professor of Music (piano) Yakov Gelfand passed away on Sept. 11, 2022, just shy of his 90th birthday. Born in Leningrad, Gelfand earned his B.M., M.M., and D.M.A. degrees from Leningrad Conservatory and established himself as a leading pianist in his native city. He taught at the conservatory until it was safe for Jews to leave the Soviet Union in the 1970s. A former student, Lawrence Perelman, notes that Gelfand was part of the Soviet Jewish diaspora of St. Paul, bringing with him a reputation "as someone who could take a child showing talent and shape them into a real musician." Gelfand joined the St. Olaf music faculty in 1985, retiring in 2006, and also taught at the MacPhail Center for Music in Minneapolis. Over the course of his life, Gelfand gave his gift of music to countless students in Russia, the Twin Cities, and at St. Olaf College.



Remembering John Marshall

Professor Emeritus of Chemistry John C. Marshall died on Feb. 10, 2024, after a brief illness. He was 89. Marshall earned his B.A. at Luther College, and his M.S. and doctorate degrees at Iowa State University. He married Kathryn Mills, and they had two children, Cynthia and John. Marshall joined the St. Olaf chemistry faculty in 1961. While his coursework focused primarily on organic and analytical chemistry, his research interests included spectroscopy and applications of then-emerging computer technologies to chemistry. During his tenure at St. Olaf, he spent a substantial amount of time teaching and doing research at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Marshall retired in 1996.

As a young man, Marshall excelled in athletics, playing basketball and baseball; he also was an avid marathon runner and motorcycle enthusiast. He ran his last marathon when he was 73 years old in St. George, Utah, just down the road from Hurricane, Utah, where he made his home in retirement. He traveled thousands of miles across the country on his Honda Goldwing, taking with him his Nikon cameras to capture incredible images of the places he visited. His obituary notes that "John's life was rich, colorful, full, and well-lived. He will be remembered by all for his wit, fierce independence, zest for life, and ability to solve *The New York Times* crossword puzzles."



Remembering Richard Peterson

Professor Emeritus of English and Classics Richard Peterson died on March 10, 2024, at his home in New York City. He was 88.

Peterson earned his B.A., M.A., and Ph.D. at the University of Minnesota, where his doctorate focused on 18th-century English literature with Latin as a sub-specialty. He joined the St. Olaf English faculty in 1963, and because of his mastery of Latin, he also taught part-time in the Classics Department. Peterson was a devoted and productive scholar whose academic research and writing focused on English Restoration poetry, Latin poetry and history, and the poetry of T.S. Eliot. A respected international scholar who traveled extensively, Peterson served as the book review editor of the *Eighteenth-Century Studies* academic journal, and for many years was the executive secretary of the Eighteenth-Century Society, whose meetings he regularly attended.

Throughout his tenure, Peterson was devoted to his students. He expected them to do their assigned work, and when they were having trouble, he would meet with them and help them, but he would not lower his academic standards nor forgive their lack of effort. In turn, his students came to respect him and honored him with their own diligence.

"He was a formidable presence in my undergraduate days," says retired St. Olaf College President David R. Anderson '74. "But I shall always remember him for his generosity: the many kindnesses and the support he afforded me as I found my way in the academy after college. Richard was a demanding teacher, a thoughtful mentor, and a steadfast friend." Peterson retired from St. Olaf in 1996 after serving for 33 years.

Peterson was preceded in death by his wife, Ellen Flamm, and his stepson, Eric Flamm. He is survived by his stepchildren, Maya Flamm, Michael Flamm, and Robin Flamm (Eric); four stepgrandchildren; and his godchild, **Inger Johnson Hanson '89**.



Remembering Monthian Buntan '90

Monthian Buntan '90, a trailblazing advocate and policymaker in disability rights who received the St. Olaf Alumni Achievement Award in 2017, has died at the age of 58. Born into a farming family in Phrae, a northern province of Thailand, and blind from birth, Buntan was "a beacon of hope and a harbinger of change for people with disabilities, not just in Thailand, but across the ASEAN [Association of Southeast Asian Nations] region and beyond," writes the editorial team for Thai.News. "His tenure on the [United Nations] Committee on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) from 2013 to 2016 marked him as the first Thai, and the first in ASEAN, to occupy such a distinguished position."

A humanities graduate of Chiang Mai University who majored in music at St. Olaf and the University of Minnesota, Buntan began his professional life as a lecturer at Ratchasuda College of Mahidol University. He was the longtime president and chair of the Thailand Association of the Blind, and served with the World Summit on



Information Society, which mainstreamed disability and produced the first disability-inclusive policy documents at the international level. Buntan was a senator of the Upper House of the Royal Thai

Parliament from 2008 to 2014 and again from 2019 to 2024. He was also a member of the National Legislative Assembly from 2014 to 2019 and an elected member of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. His legacy, writes the Thai.News team, is "inspiring continued action and fostering hope for a future marked by progress and inclusivity."

Remembering Anthony "Tony" Holt

Retired St. Olaf Instructor in Music Anthony "Tony" Holt died on Jan. 12, 2024, at the age of 83. Born in Henley-on-Thames, England, Holt grew up singing in his church choir and performing in local theatrical skits. Holt joined many National Chorister groups, leading him to be a singer, at age 12, in Westminster Abbey for the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II. He attended the prep school Brighton College, where his interests were music (singing and violin), theater, cricket, and languages, later winning a place at Oxford and a job singing in the Christchurch Cathedral choir. After graduation and marriage to Janette Buqué, he was a freelance singer in Chichester Cathedral, and sang with the BBC Singers, before becoming the high baritone for the King's Singers, the British six-man vocal group with whom he toured the world and made classical, folk, and popular recordings from 1969 to 1986. During that time, the King's Singers appeared multiple times on *The Tonight Show with Johnny Carson* and had regular appearances on British TV.

In 1987, remarried to Lynne Warfel, he moved to California and Scotland before settling in Northfield. Joining the St. Olaf music faculty in 1991, Holt taught part-time at the college, had a private voice studio, and helped raise two boys. He retired from St. Olaf in 2014. In 2018 he reconnected with Beverly Taylor, who had been the American agent for the King's Singers from 1981-87. They married in 2019 and Holt joined her in Madison, Wisconsin. They managed to fit in a few road trips and a reunion in England despite COVID-19 and dementia affecting their longer-term future plans.



Holt is survived by his wife, Beverly; his children, Sarah, Julian, Joshua, and **Peter Holt '10**; five grandchildren; and his brother, Michael.



Art as a Community-Building Tool

By Ruben Duffie

FROM THE MOMENT SHE ARRIVED on campus as a first-year student, Ruhama Solomon '24 began finding ways to get involved and create community.

In each of her four years on the Hill, she contributed art to the annual UPRISING exhibit that narrates the experiences of Black students, faculty, and staff. For the past two years, she assumed a leadership role and served as a co-curator of the show.

She is the first St. Olaf student twice selected as a George Floyd Fellow. Her work through that fellowship brought established Twin Cities artists to campus and created greater awareness about environmental racism and the ties between art and politics in Washington, D.C.

She has served as president of the St. Olaf Chapel Choir, was an actor and treasurer of the POC Ole Theater Ensemble, and founded the East African Student Association. Along the way, she has carved out deeper spaces for more students to find community on the Hill.

Solomon began her journey into much of this work in 2020, while the world was in isolation and racial tensions were on the rise around the globe. "I learned to find my voice through my art, especially when grappling with my identity at the time. It became a prevalent theme in my writing," she says.

At St. Olaf, UPRISING provided her with a platform to hone and share the performative poetry at the heart of her work. As she became more involved, it also enabled her to assume a leadership position and think about the important role the exhibition plays in reclaiming space for Black students at a predominantly white institution.

"It is exhausting to constantly work to be accepted and supported. However, we take that, reclaim it, and use this space to address and tackle discrimination on and off campus at its core," Solomon says.

As she wrapped up her last year with the exhibition this spring, Solomon worked with other leaders to revise UPRISING's constitution so that next year Northfield community members can get involved in the show as well — a change she hopes will serve as a catalyst for increased dialogue and action.

"Art is a form that is extremely universal and has been historically used as a method of communication and call for action. It also is a community-building tool, and encourages learning to understand different perspectives. It is not confined. It is emotional, and there is the potent element of feeling that comes with it," Solomon says.

Through her work on campus, Solomon has learned the power of showing up and speaking out. Along the way, she's expanded the outlets Oles have to find their own voice.

"I have learned how to advocate and fight for the interests of the underrepresented communities I am in — and provide a space where everyone is valued for who they are," she says. "I have learned to listen to understand things and people, and not merely to respond to them. I have learned to encourage newcomers and help create a foundation for the greater good of an organization and its mission when I depart."

At St. Olaf, she's done just that. 🙌

"I have worked to set a foundation for community and engagement," says Ruhama Solomon '24, photographed at the UPRISING exhibit at St. Olaf in February.



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“

It's important to support institutions that have both influenced me and allowed me to help others learn and go out into the world. Years from now, I don't know what the priorities will be for St. Olaf. I like to think my gift will benefit students seeking opportunities that will change them, and I trust my colleagues will steward my gift wisely.

— Adam Berliner ”

Associate Professor of Mathematics, Statistics, and Computer Science Adam Berliner joined the faculty in 2009. He recently included an unrestricted bequest for St. Olaf in his will. His legacy gift will help the college and Oles meet emergent needs and opportunities. It's a way he can keep supporting students far into the future.



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Visit plannedgiving.stolaf.edu or call 1-800-776-6523.

Adam Berliner
Associate Professor of Mathematics,
Statistics, and Computer Science

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PARTING SHOT



BUILDING FOR FUTURE SUCCESS | Four evenings a week, St. Olaf students gather in Regents Hall of Natural and Mathematical Sciences to learn welding, metalworking, woodworking, and 3-D printing. It's all part of the *Fundamentals of Building* program led by Physics Department technician Kurtis Johnson, who sees this as an opportunity for students to hone skills they may need in the workforce. "As a scientist, there comes a point when the test you want to perform isn't a test that's ever been performed," Johnson says. "You can no longer buy what you need to conduct research — you have to build it yourself." This initiative, which is part of the Ole Career Launcher program, is designed to make sure St. Olaf students can do just that. *Read more at stolaf.edu/news in a story by Ella Cereghino '25. Photo by Carter Schafer '24.*