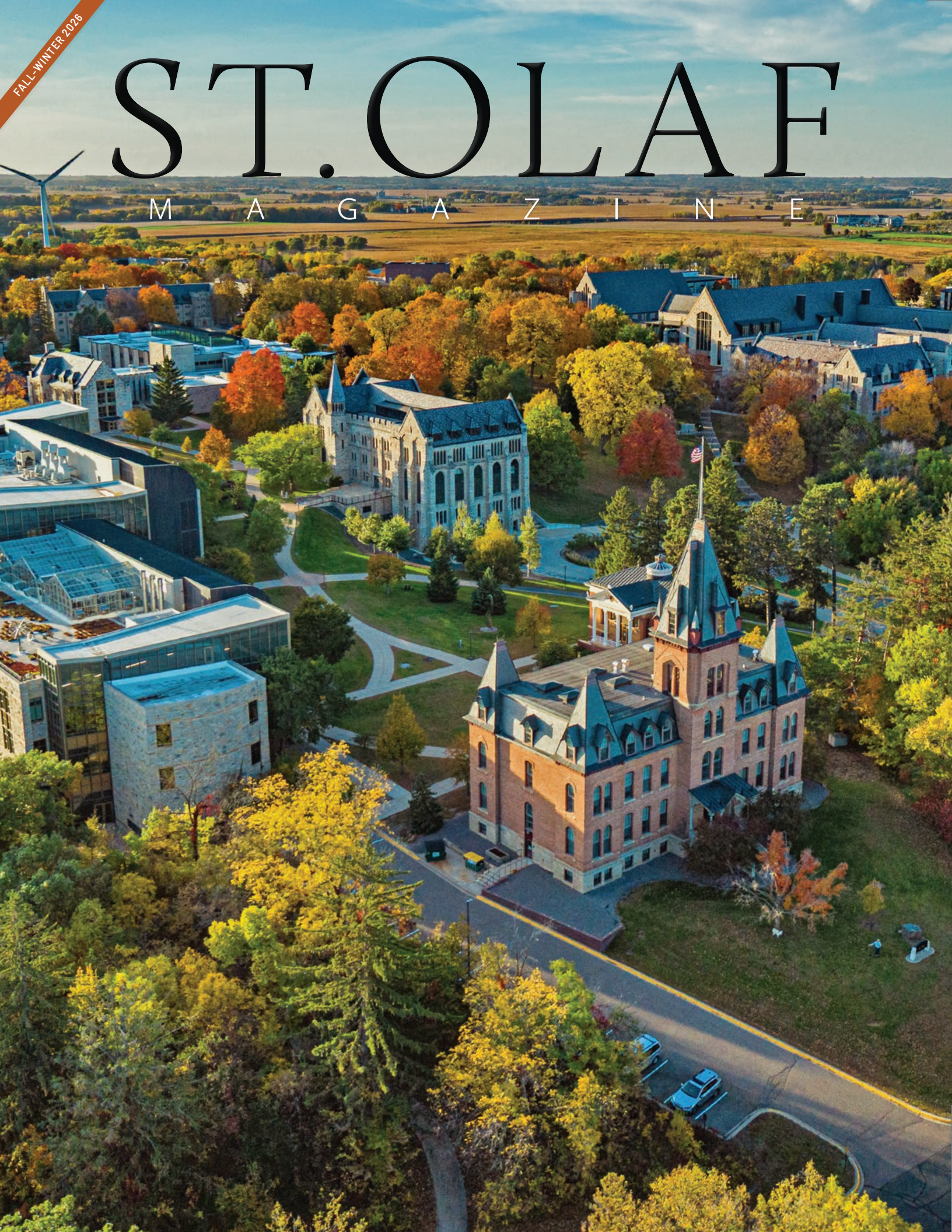
FALL-WINTER 2026

ST.OLAF

MAGAZINE



ON THE COVER

The campus glows in the radiant late afternoon sunshine of a beautiful fall day on the Hill.
PHOTO BY FERNANDO SEVILLA

ST. OLAF MAGAZINE

Fall–Winter 2026
Volume 73 · No. 3

EDITOR
Kari VanDerVeen

STAFF WRITER/EDITOR
Olivia Schmidt

ART DIRECTOR
Don Bratland '87

DIRECTOR OF CREATIVE SERVICES
Fernando Sevilla

CHIEF MARKETING OFFICER
Katie Warren '95

COPY EDITOR
Carole Engblom

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS
Kat Dodge, Evan Pak '19, Erin Peterson, Olivia Schmidt

CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHERS
Mike Bostrom, Brandon Cash '16, Steven Garcia '20, Evan Pak '19, Fernando Sevilla

CONTRIBUTING ILLUSTRATOR
Thomas Hardy '20

Readers may send name/address changes and corrections to: Advancement Services, St. Olaf College, 1520 St. Olaf Ave., Northfield, MN 55057; email: *update@stolaf.edu* or call 507-786-3330

Class Notes and Milestones: Contact the Office of Alumni and Parent Relations, 507-786-3028 or 888-865-6537; update online at *stolaf.edu/alumni/share-your-news;* email: *alum-office@stolaf.edu*

St. Olaf Magazine is published three times a year by the St. Olaf College Marketing and Communications team; email: *magazine@stolaf.edu*

ST. OLAF COLLEGE

stolaf.edu

instagram.com/stolafcollege

facebook.com/stolafcollege

youtube.com/stolaf

linkedin.com/school/stolaf

tiktok.com/@stolafcollege



CONTRIBUTOR SPOTLIGHT



Thomas Powell Hardy '20 *(@thomaspowellhardy)* is an illustrator and fine artist living in Minneapolis. At St. Olaf, he majored in studio art with an environmental studies concentration.



Student leaders welcome new Oles to the Hill during Move-In Weekend.
PHOTO BY EVAN PAK '19



ST.OLAF
MAGAZINE

FALL–WINTER 2026

2 **Letter to Oles**
From President Susan Rundell Singer

3 **The St. Olaf Method**
A new summer program in partnership with University Enterprise Laboratories challenges Oles to build their own paths to knowledge through experimentation, variation, and, yes, even failures.
BY OLIVIA SCHMIDT

9 **How to Launch a Career in Finance**
St. Olaf prepares students for competitive finance careers by combining technical training, coaching, and networking with the liberal arts foundation that has always set its graduates apart.
BY ERIN PETERSON

16 **A Celebration of Civic Leadership and Community Engagement**
One year after the launch of the Svoboda Center for Civic Engagement, the college paid tribute to its impact and the generosity of Paul Svoboda '81. BY KARI VANDERVEEN

17 **Shaping and Saving Lives**
The Rockswold Health Scholars Program, which marked its 15th anniversary this summer, has provided more than 90 Oles with an immersive experience in the field of medicine. BY OLIVIA SCHMIDT

24 **Global Engagement**
The 43rd annual Gimse Global Engagement Photo Contest features student photos and observations from around the world.
PHOTO ESSAY

33 **On the Hill**
Read updates on the St. Olaf music ensembles, a recap of Homecoming and Family Weekend, and highlights of the fall season in Ole Athletics.

38 **Beyond the Hill**
Alumni News, Class Notes, and Milestones
BY KARI VANDERVEEN AND OLIVIA SCHMIDT

48 **Oles Together: How Oles Got the State Gemstone on the Minnesota License Plate**
Lars Leafblad '99 joined forces with Ole legislators to help showcase the Lake Superior agate. BY KAT DODGE



Ole the Lion checks in at Ellingson Hall on Move-In Day.
PHOTO BY STEVEN GARCIA '20

FROM THE DESK OF

PRESIDENT SUSAN RUNDELL SINGER



Dear Oles,

The cover of this issue of *St. Olaf Magazine* gives you a window into the beautiful fall we've had on the Hill. While our campus has evolved in many ways over the decades, one thing that never changes is how stunning St. Olaf becomes when autumn leaves hit their peak colors. I'm convinced that it's one of the reasons we're regularly ranked as one of the nation's most beautiful college campuses by publications ranging from *U.S. News & World Report* to *Travel + Leisure* magazine. We were even ranked 13th nationally for the most beautiful fall foliage by College Consensus — the only college in Minnesota to make the list. As someone from the Northeast, which is widely seen as the premier destination in the country for fall foliage, this is quite remarkable.

We've also received a number of other top rankings in recent months. In the *U.S. News & World Report* list of Best Colleges, St. Olaf ranked No. 11 for Best Value, No. 25 for Most Innovative, No. 30 for Study Abroad, and No. 46 for Best Undergraduate Teaching. The *Princeton Review* ranked St. Olaf No. 8 for Best Classroom Experience and No. 9 for Great Financial Aid, and included the college on its list of "Best Value Colleges for 2027." St. Olaf was also once again named a "Best College" by *Money* magazine, which factors affordability heavily into its rankings. According to the National Science Foundation Survey of Earned Doctorates, we are ranked 13th nationally in the number of graduates who go on to earn Ph.D.s. And the College Scorecard for 2026 ranks us 29th nationally among colleges and universities for the highest graduation rate — 85.9 percent — for first-generation college students.

What's important about these rankings is that they reflect the strength of the experiences that we work so hard to provide for our students, and the powerful paths that they shape for Oles after graduation. Our top marks for innovation and teaching can be seen, for example, in the University Enterprise Laboratories (UEL) Internship Program that we launched this summer in coordination with Sam Shuster '92 (read more on page 3). Or in the Rockswold Health Scholars Program, established 15 years ago in partnership with renowned neurosurgeon Gaylan Rockswold '62 to provide Oles with an immersive experience in the field of medicine (read more on page 17). Or in the myriad ways we prepare students for careers in finance by pairing rigorous courses in economics and mathematics — including a popular new major in quantitative economics — with the power of a broad liberal arts education, hands-on industry experiences and internships, and mentorship from alumni and coaches in the Piper Center for Vocation and Career (read more on page 9).

Our strength in study abroad can be seen through our students' eyes in the annual Gimse Global Engagement Photo Contest that begins on page 24. And our top marks for affordability and value can be seen throughout this issue, in programs that are supported by the generosity of alumni and our commitment to financial aid. St. Olaf meets 100 percent of every admitted student's demonstrated financial need — something that very few colleges in the country can say. It's one of the clearest ways we put our values into practice.

Through our strategic plan, we are working to further expand hands-on learning for our students and provide funding for unpaid or underpaid internships. We also aim to increase our investment in financial aid, including expanding merit-based scholarships that recognize leadership, creativity, and excellence in the arts and sciences. If we truly believe education changes lives, then expanding access to opportunity must remain at the center of our mission. That commitment is not separate from academic excellence — it strengthens it.

What excites me most about St. Olaf right now is not any single number. It's the fact that more students are choosing St. Olaf because they see something special here. They recognize the quality of our education, the strength of our community, and the breadth of opportunities available on the Hill. We are building on success, not resting on it. It's a great time to be an Ole.

Um! Yah! Yah!

Susan Rundell Singer

UM! YAH! YAH!

THE ST. OLAF METHOD

At St. Olaf College, students learn in a multitude of ways, from classroom lectures to hands-on research and field experiences. This past summer, however, a new pilot program off the Hill challenged Oles to build their own path to knowledge through experimentation, variation, and, yes, even failures. Fortunately, those students already had a roadmap: the scientific method.



BY OLIVIA SCHMIDT

PHOTOS BY STEVEN GARCIA '20



From left: Ava Spohn '28, Tine Museka '28, Ibrahim Awada '27, Jessica Wasson (University of Minnesota), Gelila Lemma '27, and Michael Wold (Lecturer at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls and UEL mentor) at University Enterprise Laboratories in St. Paul.

QUESTION

For Oles, what can a summer at UNIVERSITY ENTERPRISE LABORATORIES mean?

In a St. Olaf College lab, an experiment often begins with instructions — students learn a technique, follow a procedure, compile data, review their results, and determine if the outcome matches their expectations.

For Tine Museba ’28, that structure had become familiar through her science courses and research experiences at St. Olaf. But as she worked this summer in a biotechnology startup, the process looked different. There wasn’t always a prescribed next step. Sometimes she had to figure out why. And then she had to decide what to try next.

“I got through the whole experimental process, from planning an experiment to seeing it through,” she says. “When it didn’t work, I planned another one until it did.”

That transition — from learning established scientific methods to using them to tackle questions for which there aren’t answers *yet* — was at the heart of a new pilot program between St. Olaf and University Enterprise Laboratories (UEL) that placed Oles inside some of the most innovative Twin Cities startup companies.

In a way, the program itself was an experiment.



TINE MUSEBA ’28 speaks at a Piper Center event in August about her experience at an entrepreneurial startup as part of a new program between St. Olaf College and University Enterprise Laboratories.

BACKGROUND RESEARCH

The students who arrived at UEL this summer weren’t starting from scratch.

Ibrahim Awada ’27, a biology major with a concentration in biomolecular science, had already completed lab courses in chemistry, genetics, and microbiology. Much of what he encountered in his internship with GRIP Molecular Technologies, a biotech company developing rapid diagnostic tests for infectious diseases, felt technically familiar.

“A lot of the sciencey stuff, like the experiments, there’s a lot of overlap between what we did at St. Olaf and what we’re doing here,” Awada says. “Especially on the chemistry side of things, a lot of the skills I learned in class and in my directed undergraduate research were particularly useful in preparing me for a working lab environment. Another thing I’ve learned is the importance of working in a team — relying on each other, rather than everyone going off and doing their own thing.”

While those signature St. Olaf experiences provide students with a scientific foundation, the UEL program was designed to test what can happen when they bring that academic knowledge into an entrepreneurial setting.

UEL is a Twin Cities incubator that provides laboratory space and infrastructure for early stage companies working primarily in fields like biological, medical, and agricultural technology. Executive Director Sam Shuster ’92 P’25 describes one part of UEL’s mission as providing “labs to launch” businesses. Increasingly, UEL is pairing that work with what Shuster describes as “labs to learn”: opportunities to educate and engage the next generation of scientists.

“We provide the place and space, the sophisticated infrastructure that may otherwise be cost-prohibitive, for startup companies to build out on their own,” he says. “The other part that we’re focusing on now, which is a strategic priority, is educating, inspiring, and engaging the next generation of talent who may either start the types of companies at UEL or find a career in an early stage lab-based business.”

This summer, five Oles joined two students from the University of Minnesota for the inaugural iteration of an internship program developed in collaboration with St. Olaf’s Piper Center for Vocation and Career and the University of Minnesota’s College of Biological Sciences.

“It was an easy leap for me to loop St. Olaf in, as I know

HYPOTHESIS

Behind the summer's pilot program was a proposition: give students experience inside early stage companies, and they begin to see how the scientific knowledge they were developing at St. Olaf might become a tool for innovation.

For Shuster, there's a natural connection between that work and a liberal arts education.

"Knowing how to think and ask questions, and do the research, I think is an incredibly important skill — and a liberal arts education does that in spades," he says. "In the context of the liberal arts, you are exposed to a lot of ideas, which broadens your thinking, and helps you to ask open-ended questions. It is essential, if you are working in an entrepreneurial space, to be really good at asking well-developed questions — it is kind of everything, actually. Innovation depends on it."

That made UEL an especially fitting laboratory to test the hypothesis. Rather than observing established technologies, students got hands-on experience running novel trials from emerging companies in the process of creation.

And soon, they were right in the middle of it.

> "It is essential, if you are working in an entrepreneurial space, to be really good at asking well-developed questions. Innovation depends on it."
> — UEL Executive Director SAM SHUSTER '92 P'25

the Piper Center quite well because both my daughter and nephew used the Piper Center extensively, so from afar I got to watch their incredible work," Shuster says. "I knew they were forward-leaning, entrepreneurial-thinking, and from the initial discussion, it seemed like there was alignment — the goal of having this lab to learn and having a way to get young people trained to intern in our resident company labs seemed to be a great fit with the work being done at St. Olaf."

The experience began with a week of laboratory and professional training before students spent 10 weeks working within Twin Cities startup companies. For Oles like Museba, that first week provided an early glimpse of how familiar classroom techniques could take on new significance.

"Some of the things I realized I've done in my classes, but it was nice to see how they can be applied in a professional setting, how they're used in industry research in addition to academics," she says. "The skills I have from St. Olaf, I carry them, and will be able to use them wherever I go."

EXPERIMENT

Across their internships, the students encountered very different enterprises working to address a wide array of problems.

Museba joined Claros Technologies, deploying technology that uses ultraviolet light to permanently destroy PFAS, commonly known as "forever chemicals." Awada worked as an assay development technician at GRIP Molecular Technologies, the diagnostics startup currently targeting sexually transmitted diseases. Ali Haidar '27 interned as a data scientist for Jord BioScience, a company pioneering microbial activator technology. Ava Spohn '28 and Gelila Lemma '27 both spent the summer with NovoClade, where their work involved a biological approach to invasive-species control.

Shuster sees the range of projects as one of the program's strengths.

"Students were exposed to companies working on some of the most significant challenges society is grappling with," Shuster says. "They are right at the cutting edge of some very compelling research to address and hopefully remedy some of those very pressing problems."



GELILA LEMMA '27

For Lemma, each day's work was determined, in part, by what happened the day before.

"Whatever happened yesterday had direct effects on what I'm doing today," she says. "Each day I would enter the lab, assess the previous day's data, plan and run that day's experiment, and use those results to determine what happens next — I can't really share the details, because it's all proprietary information, but I appreciated the routine we fell into, and the work itself was very interesting. It involved a lot of learning, because it was testing things I've simply never explored before."

EXPERIMENT

The UEL program was Awada's first professional laboratory experience, and he was surprised by just how collaborative an entrepreneurial startup can be.

"It's not like everyone has their own work and just focuses on it by themself, a solitary genius coming up with one brilliant idea — it's very much a lot of intersection between different people and disciplines," he says. "Someone could start an experiment, but they're not always the one who actually finishes it. They could hand it off to someone else or someone could volunteer to step in and finish it for them. Everyone is working toward the same goal. I definitely think it is a good thing, because you learn more after taking on someone's work, especially when you're like me, just starting out."



IBRAHIM AWADA '27

At Claros, Museba began to understand why the techniques she learned in the classroom mattered beyond it. Concepts that could feel theoretical at St. Olaf were ingrained in the workflow of the developing technology.

"I could finally see how the things I was learning in class could be harnessed by an industry to create a commercial product," she says. "I wasn't just completing an assignment that would either be right or wrong — I was working to find the right thing when nobody knows what that would be yet. We are doing something for the first time, and on top of that, we are trying to build something useful that could be invested in. So, it was just very different from anything I'd ever done before, but it was an exciting change."

Museba's supervisor had a particularly useful perspective from which to watch that transition. Senior Director of Research and Development James McKone '08 spent almost a decade as a chemical engineering professor at the University of Pittsburgh before moving into the startup world. Over the course of his career, he estimates he has mentored between 50 and 100 undergraduate summer researchers — and Museba stood out.

"I was super happy with and impressed by the level of professionalism, raw talent, and communication skills that [Museba] brought to our organization," he says. "Her performance this summer, particularly in her existing abilities to both execute the work and then communicate intelligently about it, has really reinforced my sense of appreciation and confidence in the type of education that St. Olaf is offering."

SUCCESS/FAILURES/VARIABLES

While the students certainly did experience successes in their work, executing an experiment successfully wasn't always the point.

"In entrepreneurial labs, things fail more than you think they will all the time," Lemma says. "In theory, it sounds like A plus B equals C, but in practice, it's a lot of improvising, a lot of changing stuff every time, and it fails, and then you just try again. You learn to be comfortable with failure — you learn something from it each time."

There were variables to account for as well.

As students moved between the laboratory, professional-development sessions, and conversations with people throughout the startup ecosystem, they found themselves drawing on skills that weren't confined to a purely scientific discipline.

Lemma says her St. Olaf education had already made that kind of movement feel natural. She had experience not only with STEM courses, but also with literature, social sciences, and writing — areas that proved beneficial in an environment where scientists might also need to understand business, write grants, or widely share their work.

"There were times when we would be meeting with panelists or even other university students who only had ever really been interested in and studying hard science, and they shared with us about how that sort of approach only really works in an academic setting. Once you're in the professional world, you need to be able to do a lot of different things that are not research related at all," she says. "I was really grateful that I was already familiar with that sort of interdisciplinary approach to science that we have at St. Olaf, where I do feel confident writing in a way where I'm trying to communicate to people who don't have a science background, or am able to draft a business proposal. It makes me feel prepared for life post-grad."

It's an idea familiar to the St. Olaf alumni now working on the other side of the internship experience.

"If you want innovation, you can't just do what everybody else is doing. You have to say, 'Where are the gaps? And what are the unsolved problems where the need is real?' St. Olaf gives you that mission orientation, that feeling, that belief, that knowledge that you can and must help make the world a better place."

— JORD BIOSCIENCE FOUNDER LINDA KINKEL '81



ALI HAIDAR '27 and BARBARA NELSEN '84, UEL'S Board Chair

McKone double majored in chemistry and music at St. Olaf before earning a doctorate and building a career in research. He says his music education proved at least as important for his professional development as his science coursework, particularly as he learned to communicate complex ideas to different audiences.

"I had opportunities to overcome challenges or anxieties about getting up in front of a group of people and talking about stuff, or in some cases singing about stuff, or whatever it is that I needed to do," McKone says. "That type of experience really made me and continues to make me much more effective as I am working with a broad group of people and am asked to get up in front of that group of people and try to explain something or advocate for an outcome."

Now at Claros, McKone regularly moves among researchers, engineers, business leaders, and sales teams.

"The ability to move laterally across adjacent fields or to be able to translate the language that one person is using, be it technical or non-technical, into a language that's easily understood by someone else who ultimately needs to work together — those are all skills that come hand in glove with the liberal arts mindset," he says. "You are prepared to foster an environment of collaboration and connection."

McKone can trace his own interest in innovation back to what he calls "identity experiences" during his first years on the Hill. Working with faculty in chemistry helped him begin to see himself as someone who could participate in scientific discovery and make an impact. During a campus-wide focus on sustainability, he began asking what chemistry could contribute to environmental sustainability.

"One thing led to another in terms of that budding enthusiasm, and I ended up pursuing graduate school opportunities that were oriented in that area, and have spent the whole intervening 10 to 15 years of my life still trying to focus on innovation and sustainability," McKone says.

Jord BioScience founder and Chief Science Officer Linda Kinkel '81, P'19 can trace an even longer line from her own undergraduate experience to the opportunities she's now providing.

As a junior at St. Olaf, Kinkel received a handwritten note in her campus mailbox from Professor of Biology Alice Burton telling her to come to her office immediately. Kinkel, dressed for track practice, ran over. Burton told her about a summer research opportunity at Carleton College and insisted she apply.

She did — and it redirected her career.

"It was a National Science Foundation grant … and I lived for a summer with seven guys in a house, and I worked with a scientist who studied little green algae," Kinkel shares. "One day he said to me, 'I think you like this,' and I said, 'I love the work, but who cares about a little alga?' And he threw his head back and laughed and he said, 'Have you heard about plant pathology?' … And he told me about this field where I could work with plants while contributing to making the world a better place."

Kinkel went on to a career as a faculty member in plant pathology at the University of Minnesota before founding Jord BioScience, which develops microbial technologies for agriculture. Now when she sees interns enter her laboratory, she thinks about her own trajectory toward a career she hadn't known existed.

"The reason to open up internships at Jord is because an internship changed my life," Kinkel says. "It changed my entire professional direction. Also, I have spent nearly four decades supervising interns and undergrads in my lab at the University of Minnesota, and bringing that to Jord keeps that passion and that connection alive."

That breadth of possibility, drive, and relationships, she says, is essential to innovation.

"If you want innovation, you can't just do what everybody else is doing," Kinkel says. "You have to say, 'Where are the gaps? What are the differentiators? And what are the unsolved problems where the need is real?' St. Olaf gives you that mission orientation, that feeling, that belief, that knowledge that you can and must help make the world a better place. Those things together are, I think, a lot of what can drive innovation."

RESULTS/CONCLUSION

By the end of the summer, the first results of the UEL experiment were becoming visible — not only in what students had accomplished in their respective labs, but in how they imagined what might come next.

Museba entered the summer uncertain about whether she wanted to pursue post-graduate studies or move directly into a career after St. Olaf. She left with a much clearer answer.

"I know that I want to work in the lab now," she says. "I definitely want a career that's lab and research focused — using science to solve all these big problems that we have here and now."

What's more, she had also grown comfortable with the uncertainty that once intimidated her.

"Sometimes having the unexpected and figuring it out as you go is actually pretty interesting. It always terrified me before, and that was part of why I was scared of actually going into a full-time career post-graduation," Museba says. "But I actually enjoy the day-to-day work, not knowing what to expect, figuring things out as you go."

Lemma experienced a similar change. After beginning the summer accustomed to working closely under the guidance of faculty mentors, she began to see herself differently.

"It really pushed me to think of myself as this individual researcher that still works with other people," she says. "I design my experiments, I collaborate with other people and see their perspectives, and I kind of basically own my workday. I think that was really cool to do."

Lemma's post-graduate possibilities expanded as well.

"It was really nice to talk with people that sometimes weren't aligned with my intended path at all, and sometimes it was that advice that really kind of shook me and said, 'Oh, okay, maybe I do want to do more biotechnology straight off the bat from post-grad instead of just pursuing pure academia.'"



UEL Executive Director SAM SHUSTER '92 P'25

> "It was nice being part of the process where they were figuring out how to best structure this program for future students. I hope it only gets better from this and there's more students each year."
> — GELILA LEMMA '27

Those outcomes matter to Shuster because he sees students not simply as beneficiaries of an innovation ecosystem, but as essential participants in one.

"Thinking about the health of an innovation ecosystem, one way that I think you can measure it is by the number of students that are engaged in it," he says. "They bring novel thinking, technical competency, enthusiasm, energy — it underscores the long-term trajectory and viability of an innovation ecosystem. You need that next generation of talent."

While this first summer served as an initial test, St. Olaf and Shuster announced this fall that the program would continue next year and beyond, building on the success of the inaugural cohort and creating opportunities for more Oles to explore careers in biotechnology and innovation.

For Lemma, being a participant in the pilot meant having a hand in shaping whatever comes next.

"It was nice being part of the process where they were figuring out how to best structure this program for future students," she says. "I hope it only gets better from this and there's more students each year."

She has some advice for those Oles:

"You will always have questions. So ask. People really value your questions and your time more than you think. So don't be afraid to be open. Just ask."

For a program built around experimentation, perhaps that's a fitting result: the students didn't leave UEL with all the answers, but rather more comfortable with what researchers, entrepreneurs, and innovators already know — sometimes figuring out what comes next begins with being willing to ask a question.

COMMUNICATE RESULTS

Hey, that's this story!

Hear from Oles about their summer experiences at University Enterprise Laboratories (UEL) and the lessons they learned along the way! Scan this QR code or visit *stolaf.edu/magazine* to watch.

HOW TO LAUNCH A CAREER IN FINANCE

(WITH A LIBERAL ARTS DEGREE)

BY ERIN PETERSON

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY THOMAS HARDY '20



St. Olaf prepares students for competitive finance careers by combining technical training, coaching, and networking with the liberal arts foundation that has always set its graduates apart.

A SURPRISINGLY VALUABLE CLASSROOM EXPERIENCE

CUITLAHUAC TURRENT '97, an executive director at JPMorgan Chase, majored in economics at St. Olaf College and earned an MBA from New York University's prestigious Stern School of Business. But when he thinks about his education, he says one of the most valuable classes he took had nothing to do with business or finance — it was an art history class at St. Olaf.



Cuitlahuac Turrent '97

He recalls one assignment in which he and his classmates were assigned a 200-word essay on a single painting.

"We didn't have complete information on it, so we had to analyze what we knew, make some assumptions, have an opinion, and be concise," he recalls. "Those are all things I do day in and day out in my work. It was something that really developed my critical thinking and communication skills."

In the increasingly competitive world of finance — investment banking, private equity, venture capital, and similar fields — it's commonly assumed that technical chops are the key to both breaking in and succeeding.

But St. Olaf students and graduates have proven, year after year, that they can punch above their weight against peers who have focused primarily on technical preparation. Through coursework, programs, student organizations, and other opportunities, Oles build many of the same practical skills as peers at more pre-professional institutions. And they pair that preparation with the intellectual curiosity, adaptability, and collaborative abilities that come from a liberal arts education.

Together, those strengths prepare them not only to land competitive roles, but to grow, lead, and thrive in them over the long term.

"Our goal at St. Olaf is to create leaders of character who can launch into the world in a whole host of areas, including finance," says Kirsten Cahoon '98, director of the Piper Center for Vocation and Career.

Here's the roadmap students use to excel.

STEP ONE

HOP ON THE FAST-TRACK



INVESTMENT BANKS OFTEN BEGIN recruiting students early during the winter of their sophomore year for internships that begin some 18 months later, in the summer after their junior year. This compressed timeline requires students to carefully sequence their coursework and co-curricular activities.

That's where St. Olaf's Finance Fast-Track comes in.

Incoming first-year students can apply for the Finance Fast-Track and get early access to courses — including financial and managerial accounting and corporate finance — that are critical to landing these competitive internships. As part of the Fast-Track, they also receive intensive one-on-one support from Piper Center coaches, all while maintaining space for other courses and activities.

"Students might not be completely decided on finance, but if they have an interest or an aptitude in it, this is a program that will keep the doors open," says Piper Center Senior Associate Director Bryan Shealer.

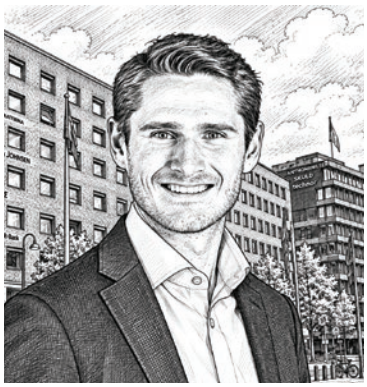
Interest in the Finance Fast-Track is growing: the 2023 pilot attracted four students; in 2026, the program drew 27.

FROM STUDENT INSIGHT TO FINANCE FAST-TRACK

During his junior and senior years, Danny Zalk '19, now a director at the Oslo-based private equity company Verdane, was working as a peer advisor at the Piper Center.

When he noticed that some students were struggling to get the right coursework before applying for finance internships, he mentioned it to Cahoon.

Together, they worked with faculty to sequence existing courses into an accelerated two-year finance curriculum. Cahoon packaged it up with tailored Piper Center coaching and networking opportunities



Danny Zalk '19

designed to give students the foundation they needed to compete successfully for internships. The Finance Fast-Track was born.

Cahoon says the Finance Fast-Track reflects the Piper Center's broader commitment to learning from what students and alumni are experiencing in internships and on the job — and using those insights to shape its programming. "We want to make sure students have many opportunities, and that we're positioning them for success," she says.

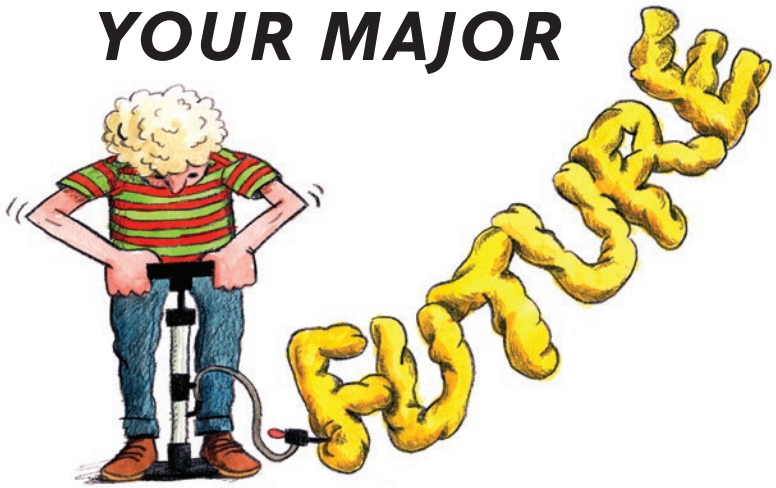
DYK? *Oles in the Finance Fast-Track program have landed internships or jobs at firms including JPMorgan Chase, Piper Sandler, U.S. Bank, Capital One, Wells Fargo, 3M, Boeing, Thomson Reuters, and Ameriprise.*



My $0.02 *"The advice I give to students starting in investment banking and private equity as an intern — though it applies more generally — is to just crush the very first project you work on. Work so hard on it, because that's how you'll get more and more responsibility. Will that first project be exciting? No. But do it well, and you will be rewarded."* — DANNY ZALK '19

STEP TWO

MAXIMIZE YOUR MAJOR



OLES STRENGTHEN THEIR PREPARATION for business careers through majors in economics and quantitative economics, as well as a five-course finance emphasis within the economics major. "An economics major prepares students with a strong foundation," says St. Olaf Entrepreneur in Residence Sian Christie, who is director of the major's finance emphasis. "And the emphasis provides an even deeper dive."

DYK? *St. Olaf is currently hiring for a tenure-track faculty member in finance, with a tentative start of fall 2027.*

St. Olaf's economics and mathematics courses bring serious analytical muscle, challenging students to crunch numbers, think critically, and solve complex problems. The new quantitative economics major takes that rigor even further. Read more by scanning this QR code.



STEP THREE

SPEND A SUMMER WITH FINANCE|ABLE

TOP FINANCE INTERNSHIPS demand a level of technical fluency that can be difficult to build through coursework alone. And that's where Finance|able, an online training program available to any student interested in a finance internship, comes in.

Finance|able focus areas include valuation fundamentals, leveraged buyouts, mergers and acquisitions, and financial modeling. The program also provides robust training for the high-stakes, technically complex interviews associated with finance roles. Thanks in part to a gift from Mark Simenstad '81, students can access the program at no cost and complete its 30 to 50 hours of training over the summer.

"This is a microcredential that helps level the playing field [against more technically trained peers]," says Piper Center Associate Director Meghan Anderson.

DYK? *Finance|able is one of 16 offerings from St. Olaf's Career Launcher Program: hands-on, skill-building tracks that last between a few weeks and an entire semester. Other tracks include museum conservation, project management, local journalism, and real estate.*



STEP FOUR

GET A GREAT INTERNSHIP

SYDNEY WAGNER '21 BEGAN visiting the Piper Center as a first-year student, set her sights on a career in finance, and gobbled up every resource she could — from coaching to networking with St. Olaf alumni. The effort paid off when she landed an internship at Jefferies.

She credits Piper Center resources and step-by-step approach as a key to her success.

"Kirsten [Cahoon] and Bryan [Shealer] set me up with lily pads that helped get me where I wanted to be," she says. "They were always ready to read a last-minute, late-night resume. They were happy to give a second opinion on a cover letter. Kirsten had the ability to remember alums from 15 years ago, and knew how they could connect me to someone who could help me. I would not be where I am now without them."



Sydney Wagner '21

Students can also access a database of more than 1,300 internships completed by Oles since 2008 and receive up to $2,500 to support their internships.

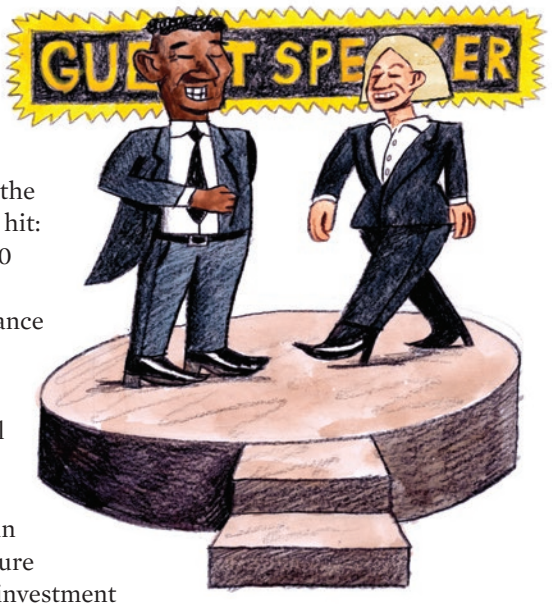
The differentiator at the Piper Center, says Cahoon, is the people. "Here, you get really personalized relationships that will help you go the distance," she says.

DYK? The Princeton Review *ranked St. Olaf's Piper Center for Vocation and Career No. 21 in the nation.*

STEP FIVE

JOIN THE CLUB

IN 2025 BRENDEN RAVNDAL '26 AND HAMZAH AZZAM '27, both Piper Center peer advisors interested in finance careers, launched the Finance Club at St. Olaf.



Designed both to introduce students to a broad range of careers in finance and help them find their place in the field, the club was an immediate hit: The group has some 130 students on its mailing list, and weekly attendance of 20 to 30 students.

In the club's inaugural year, Ravndal and Azzam introduced students to the range of different fields within finance, including venture capital, private equity, investment banking, wealth management, and corporate finance. They also offered skill-building workshops on topics such as financial modeling, hosted two alumni visits, and worked with the Piper Center to bring back Finance 101, an alumni panel and networking event for high-finance careers.

This year, Azzam, now the president of the club, aims to expand its programming. "We're hoping to collaborate with the Piper Center to give Oles access to a network of people, do field visits, and learn from those who are actually doing this work," he says.

ACCOUNTING FOR EXPERIENCE

To give club members hands-on experience, the St. Olaf Finance Office invited them to take on two projects involving applied accounting and financial modeling:

Students updated St. Olaf's Finance Fact Book, annual finance presentation, website, and budget training materials to make financial information clearer and more accessible across campus.

Using 2024–25 financial data, students created an interactive dashboard showing revenue and expenses across departments and divisions.

DYK? *The Bureau of Labor Statistics projects above-average growth in finance occupations over the next decade.*



STEP SIX

HEAD TO NEW YORK CITY

ONE OF THE BEST WAYS TO SEE if a student is a good fit for a hard-charging finance career is to visit the epicenter of the industry: New York City.

As part of St. Olaf's Connections Program, up to 25 students with an interest in finance careers spend three days visiting firms, meeting with alumni in finance roles, and taking in the city. They visit the New York Stock Exchange trading floor and take photos in front of the famous "Fearless Girl" statue on Wall Street.

The Piper Center's Bryan Shealer says that the experience can be transformative. "When you put students in these environments, they begin to envision themselves there," he says. "Where might they live? What is the work environment? What does it feel like? It's amazing the way just putting people physically in a place can inspire them."

DYK? *The New York City Connections Program is one of several Career Connections programs offered by St. Olaf. Other program tracks include arts administration, sports management and sports health, and technology.*

INSIDE A DAY OF CONNECTIONS: NYC

HERE'S A SAMPLE ITINERARY of one day in New York:

7 a.m.	BREAKFAST at hotel
8:45 a.m.	JPMORGAN CHASE visit (with Cuitlahuac Turrent '97)
Noon	LUNCH ($1.50 pizza slices!)
1:30 p.m.	MIZUHO firm visit (with Kaz Matsuo '24)
3 p.m.	GOLDMAN SACHS visit (with Rod Gui '13)
5:30 p.m.	ALUMNI PANEL
7 p.m.	Free time

STEP SEVEN

LEAN INTO LIBERAL ARTS

FOR SYDNEY WAGNER '21, PREPARING for a career in finance didn't mean narrowing her interests.

She had followed the stock market since high school and spent summers at business camps, analyzing companies like Nike and Under Armour. But she came to St. Olaf on a singing scholarship, drawn in part by the chance to keep pursuing music even without majoring in it.

Wagner, who majored in economics, is now an equity research analyst covering beauty and personal care industries at Jefferies, where she has thrived thanks in part to her liberal arts background.

"When you're in a lead analyst role, you have to figure out your edge in an industry that might have 15 or more other analysts covering the same stocks," she says. "The cross-disciplinary style of the liberal arts is helpful. You're used to drawing connections that aren't immediately obvious. There's a real creativity to that."



TREND ALERT: LIBERAL ARTS GRADUATES WILL BE IN HIGH DEMAND FOR FINANCE CAREERS

AS AI UPENDS THE WORLD, Steph Wissink '02, senior vice president and head of investor relations at Walmart, says schools that focus on strengthening students' human skills are poised to benefit. That includes students who are preparing for finance careers.



Steph Wissink '02

"The technical skills that many educational institutions have relied on as their key learning pillars are becoming automated," she says. "Softer skills, like critical thinking, synthesis, communication, and interpersonal and cultural awareness, are going to be the factors that define attractive candidates."



My $0.02 *"I became more appreciative of a liberal arts degree as I went through my career, because your ability to communicate and relate to people becomes just as important to your success as your technical knowledge."*



— MARK SIMENSTAD '81 serves on the investment committee for the St. Olaf endowment. He was chief investment strategist at Thrivent Financial before retiring in 2021.



STEP EIGHT

GET AN OLE MENTOR

FOR STUDENTS INTERESTED IN FINANCE, one of St. Olaf's most valuable resources is its alumni network, because it offers them the chance to connect with Oles who understand both where they're coming from and where they hope to go.

Alumni can offer practical advice about internships, job searches, and career paths. Over time, those connections can grow into meaningful mentorships and long-term friendships.

IN CONVERSATION: JANE WESTERN AND RISHABH GOYAL

Jane Western '78 is the retired chief operating officer for Front Office Solutions at Northern Trust in Chicago; Rishabh Goyal '26 is an associate portfolio manager at Aurora Asset Management.

Rishabh: *I met Jane at the Ole Business Connections Trip to Chicago in 2024 and reached out to her afterward.*

Jane: *When Rish reached out to me, he was trying to get ideas about job opportunities, but he was also just generally interested in investments.*

Rishabh: *Later, when I was in Chicago for an internship in the summer of 2025, we met in person many times. My senior year, we got on lots of calls to discuss my career path.*

Jane: *Looking for a job — trying to get your sea legs — is a lonely journey. I wanted to be present and available. Whenever we would talk on the phone, we would just set another time to talk. Today, even though Rish has graduated, we're still talking — because the journey has just begun.*

Rishabh: *My connection with Jane was about more than just helping me get a job or even setting me up for success in my career. She got to know me as a person. She is a good friend, and I am truly grateful for that.*



STEP NINE

PAY IT FORWARD

OLES WHO LAND JOBS IN FINANCE can often point to an alum who helped them get there — someone who hosted an event with their company or offered an internship, who provided an informational interview or mentored them more formally.

And it's why many of them choose to stay involved with St. Olaf and support current students as they chart their course. "Alumni," says Cahoon, "can be incredibly influential in the lives of our students."

HERE'S HOW YOU CAN HELP:

- Update your details in the alumni directory and indicate that you're willing to serve as a resource at stolaf.edu/alumni
- Host an intern at your business
- Host a student for an immersion program
- Mentor a St. Olaf student

Are you ready to help influence the lives of students? Contact BRYAN SHEALER at shealer@stolaf.edu or (507) 786-3049

"I FEEL LIKE I'M PART OF A LINEAGE."

JUST A FEW YEARS AFTER GRADUATING from St. Olaf and starting a job at Piper Jaffray, Steph Wissink '02 was placed on a team that included senior analyst Jeff Klinefelter '90.

"I knew we had a common foundation, and I could see that he had built a successful career," she says. "I wanted to be in as close proximity to that as I could. I worked for him my entire career at Piper, and got pulled up with him. It was an amazing gift, and we're still in touch."

"I have strong pride in Ole-to-Ole advocacy"

— Steph Wissink '02

More than a decade later, she had the chance to support a younger Ole. After mentoring Sydney Wagner '21, Wissink hired her to join her team at Jefferies.

"This wasn't just because she was an Ole — though I have strong pride in Ole-to-Ole advocacy," she says. "This was also about aptitude, decisions, and doing the work."

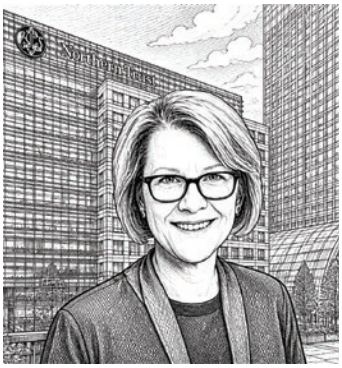
Now Wagner herself is advising younger Oles.

For Wissink, the Ole connections feel bigger than any single relationship. "I feel like I'm part of a lineage."

MAKE YOUR FRIENDS ENVIOUS

"Many of my fellow alumni get really jealous when I tell them that a student reached out to me, or that I'm meeting with students. They remember what it was like to be a student! I like learning about the professors they're working with and the research they're doing. I love hearing their stories, and knowing that I've helped somebody." — *Cuitlahuac Turrent '97*

"Why do I coach students? I think of Paul's words in Romans: We belong to each other."
— JANE WESTERN '78



A CELEBRATION OF
Civic Leadership and Community Engagement

One year after the launch of the Svoboda Center for Civic Engagement, the college paid tribute to its impact and the generosity of Paul Svoboda '81. | By Kari VanDerVeen

IT'S BEEN ONE YEAR since St. Olaf College launched the Svoboda Center for Civic Engagement. Yet as Northfield Public Schools Superintendent Tim Anderson '97 stood before the scores of community members who gathered for a daylong celebration of the center's work, he noted that civic engagement is not a new idea for St. Olaf.

"It's one of the oldest ideas that this place has," he said.

What is new, he noted, is that the generous gift that Paul Svoboda '81 provided to establish the center gave the work "a front door and a name."

The Svoboda Center for Civic Engagement nurtures students' passion for public service and builds their capacity to engage in their communities through Academic Civic Engagement (ACE) courses, internships, volunteer experiences, and research opportunities. More than 1,000 students take an ACE course each year, and the center works with more than 50 local organizations to connect Oles with opportunities to learn and serve. Over the last year, the Svoboda Center has expanded the number of students involved in St. Olaf's community-based work-study program and student service organizations.

Anderson noted that he wished the Svoboda Center had existed during his time at St. Olaf. In the decades he has spent working in public education since graduating from St. Olaf, he has realized the importance of preparing students to be critical thinkers who are curious and ready to engage in our society.

"Good work radiates to others. You almost never get to see how far, and yet it goes anyway," Anderson told those gathered for his recent talk in Boe Memorial Chapel.

He noted that, like many St. Olaf students and faculty members, he had only met the founder of the Svoboda Center for the first time that morning.

"And that's the point. He built something for people he will likely never meet, and that's what common wealth is," Anderson said. "Perhaps you've heard the phrase 'Oles Can. Oles Will.' That's not simply a slogan from a bookstore mug. It is what this place produces, generation after generation: People who don't wait for permission to be useful."

Svoboda's gift to launch the center, which is part of the Buntrock Institute for Freedom and Community, was matched by the Dean L. and Rosemarie Buntrock Foundation. Svoboda said that while he was honored and pleased to help celebrate civic engagement at St. Olaf, he wanted the spotlight to remain on the faculty, staff, and students who bring the work to life.

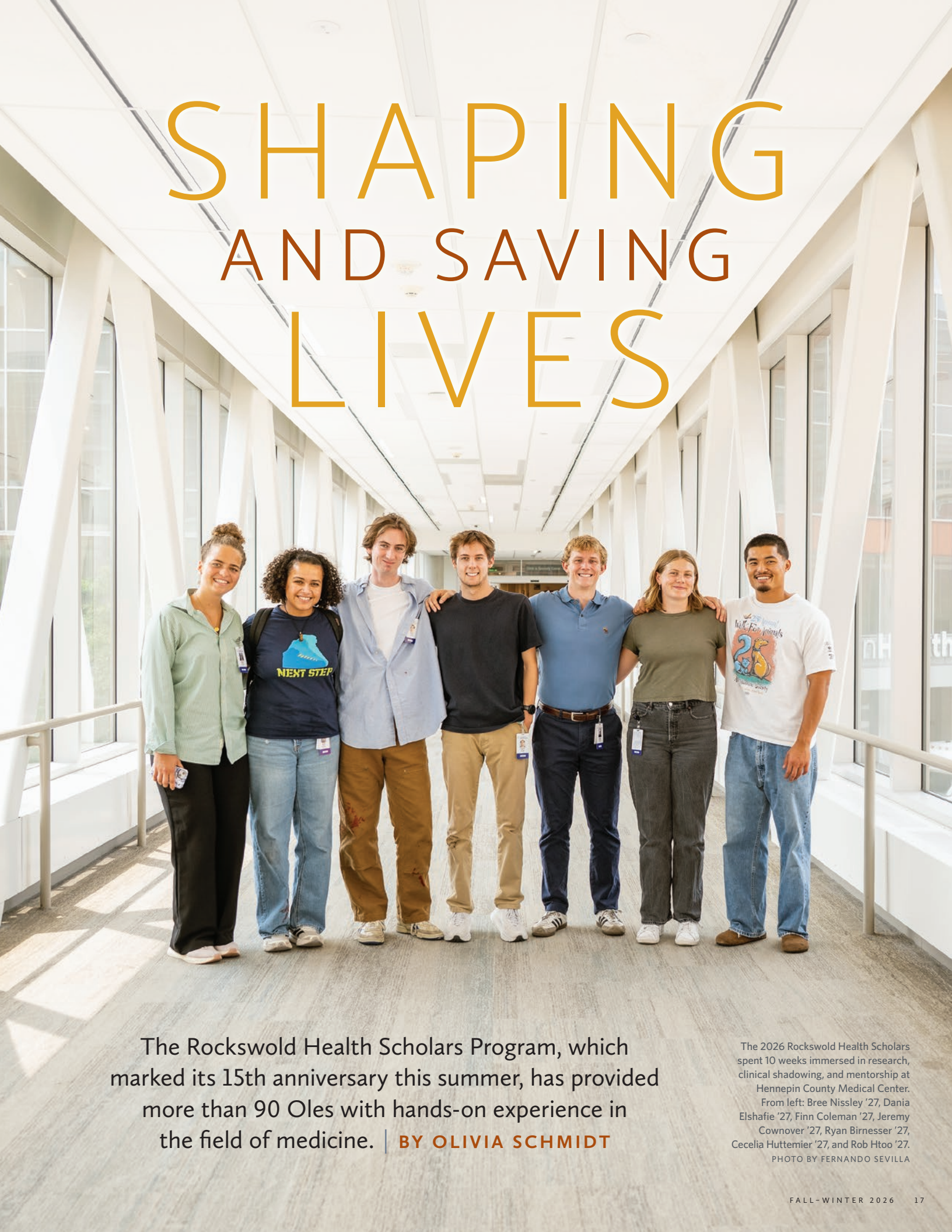
"In a world where so much changes so quickly and things come and go, civic engagement is one of those constants that never goes out of style. It's a worthwhile endeavor," he said. "There are many pathways that people can take to make a contribution. It's up to this center to foster and nurture that."

Scan this QR code to watch the chapel talk delivered by Northfield Public Schools Superintendent Tim Anderson '97.



Paul Svoboda '81 (center) with (from left) Buntrock Institute Director Chris Chapp, Assistant Director for Student Civic Leadership Erin Golden Zimmerman, President Susan Rundell Singer, Svoboda Center Director Alyssa Melby, and Svoboda Center student fellows Sophia Carlson '28, Charlie Iyegha '27, and Claire Stein '29. PHOTO BY STEVEN GARCIA '20

SHAPING AND SAVING LIVES



The Rockswold Health Scholars Program, which marked its 15th anniversary this summer, has provided more than 90 Oles with hands-on experience in the field of medicine. | BY OLIVIA SCHMIDT

The 2026 Rockswold Health Scholars spent 10 weeks immersed in research, clinical shadowing, and mentorship at Hennepin County Medical Center. From left: Bree Nissley '27, Dania Elshafie '27, Finn Coleman '27, Jeremy Cownover '27, Ryan Birnesser '27, Cecelia Huttemier '27, and Rob Htoo '27. PHOTO BY FERNANDO SEVILLA

WHEN GAYLAN ROCKSWOLD ’62 was hospitalized with life-threatening internal bleeding last summer, he knew he was in good hands at the Hennepin County Medical Center (HCMC) facility where he worked as a renowned neurosurgeon for more than four decades.

What he didn’t know was that those hands had been shaped by a program he established 15 years ago to provide St. Olaf College students with experience in the field of medicine.

Yet there on his care team was Madeleine Andersen Wagner ’18, an emergency medicine resident at HCMC who had participated in the Rockswold Health Scholars Program nearly a decade earlier.

“Taking care of him was terrifying, because he’s a person I know well who is in a vulnerable position, but it was also an honor — especially to do so at HCMC, where he had spent decades of his life bettering the care of his patients,” Andersen Wagner says.

For Rockswold, it was a full-circle moment. While he was receiving care at the hospital, the 2026 cohort of Rockswold Health Scholars were celebrating their graduation from the program at HCMC several floors below.

“And there I was up in the ICU with a former Rockswold Health Scholar taking care of me,” Rockswold recalls. “I mean, the stars aligned, so to speak.”

Andersen Wagner is one of more than 90 St. Olaf students whose paths have been shaped by the Rockswold Health Scholars Program since it launched with a pilot cohort in 2012. Over the course of 10 weeks each summer, students are immersed in the work of HCMC, pairing mentored research with clinical shadowing, seminars, community engagement, and firsthand exposure to one of Minnesota’s largest safety-net health systems.

For some, the experience confirms long-held ambitions to become a physician. For others, it introduces an entirely different career path. That opportunity for discernment was exactly what Rockswold himself wished he had received as an undergraduate.

When he arrived on the Hill as a pre-med student and chemistry major in the late 1950s, there were few opportunities for an undergraduate to experience medicine firsthand. Looking for whatever exposure he could find, Rockswold took a job as a surgical orderly at the now-defunct Luther Deaconess Hospital.

“Basically my job was to clean the floors between cases and cart patients around,” he shares. “So, it wasn’t exactly highly educational.”

Decades later, after a career that included nearly 40 years as chief of neurosurgery at HCMC, Rockswold began thinking about how he could offer Oles something different.

The idea took shape around a lunch table in 2012, where Rockswold — who is also the parent of 1990 and 1992 St. Olaf graduates — was meeting with his classmate David Tiede ’62 and St. Olaf Development Officer Grace Schroeder Scott ’72. As they discussed an upcoming class reunion, the conversation turned toward what Rockswold had long believed about St. Olaf and HCMC — that the two institutions shared a fundamental understanding of vocation as service.

“And I thought, ‘What could be better than bringing some St. Olaf students up to HCMC, for an experience to be immersed in the culture?’” Rockswold recalls.



Madeleine Andersen Wagner ’18 with Gaylan Rockswold ’62 and Mary Garnaas Rockswold ’63 P’90 ’92 at the Rockswold Health Scholars Anniversary Reception in July.
PHOTO BY STEVEN GARCIA ’20



Bree Nissley '27 (center) is assisted by Dania Elshafie '27 (left) and Rob Htoo '27 (right) in a labor simulation. PHOTO BY FERNANDO SEVILLA

FROM THE BEGINNING, the Rockswold Health Scholars Program was designed to give students access to experiences that would be difficult for an undergraduate to find on their own. Each scholar is paired with a mentor and assigned a research project at HCMC. Over the years, those placements have included traumatic brain injury, cardiac biomarkers, chronic disease research, biostatistics, public health, and violence intervention, among other fields.

But the research project is only their home base.

With support from HCMC staff, scholars can explore nearly every corner of the health care system. They have shadowed in the emergency department, surgery, obstetrics, the burn center, the poison center, and hyperbaric medicine; visited the medical examiner's office; learned about health care for unhoused persons; and explored how social services and public health intersect with clinical care.

For Bree Nissley '27, a music major on the pre-med track, that meant spending the past summer in HCMC's Restorative Neurotrauma Lab. She worked on the E-STAND spinal cord study, which explores spinal cord stimulation in patients with spinal cord injuries, while also shadowing physicians throughout the hospital.

"I think the really unique portion of the Rockswold program is that you get to see equal parts research and patient care," Nissley says.

Some days she spent 10 to 12 hours following physicians, observing surgeries, and listening as doctors adapted their approach to individual patients. At HCMC, where patients arrive with widely different backgrounds and circumstances, she began to understand that becoming an effective physician would require something beyond what she could learn from a textbook.

"I learned that the application of care has a lot more to do with intuitive people knowledge — the interactions doctors have off-book with patients to navigate the challenges to their health — as opposed to just the prescriptive skills you pick up in a classroom or through a reading," Nissley says. "I don't think I would have really understood that without being at HCMC."

That setting is fundamental to Rockswold's vision.

HCMC serves a diverse patient population, including many who are uninsured or underinsured. It is also a Level I adult and pediatric trauma center and home to a research institute that Rockswold notes has consistently ranked among the top 10 percent nationally in National Institutes of Health funding.

That combination gives students an opportunity to see sophisticated medicine and research alongside the social realities that shape health.

"There's nobody that comes to Hennepin that is turned away, regardless of their ability to pay," Rockswold says. "It results in a very diverse population — including the disadvantaged, low income, or marginal — and they are all treated exactly the same. The students all commented that it didn't make any difference who it was, somebody with an insurance card or somebody without, they were treated the same."

Scholars live together in the Twin Cities, creating a learning community that extends beyond the workday. Professor of Chemistry Mary Walczak P'13 '14, who served as faculty supervisor for the program from 2013 to 2025, would develop conversation prompts on health issues, which students discussed together informally before connecting those conversations to seminars and experiences at HCMC. For example, one week students might consider

how they would spend $500,000 to address social determinants of health, hear from a leader in HCMC's Healthcare for the Homeless program, and then learn directly from people who had experienced homelessness.

"To me, that is the epitome of this nugget of time," Walczak says. "They're plopped down in downtown Minneapolis, in a safety net hospital that is a Level I trauma center. They're seeing things that they don't see in the isolated environment on the Hill. It really opens their eyes to some of the dimensions of health care that they hadn't considered before."

Having six other Oles alongside her made those experiences easier for Nissley to process — and sometimes forced her to reconsider the assumptions she had brought with her.

"After witnessing difficult moments in the hospital, it was good to be able to come back at the end of the day and unpack it with the other scholars," she says. "I think it allows for a deeper level of learning and internalizing what we're doing. I learned more than I would have had I been alone and just reinforced my own ideas."

That combination — research, clinical exposure, community, and reflection — is intended to help scholars answer the question at the center of the program: What kind of difference do you want to make?

• • •

DANIEL DYER '13 WAS ONE OF THE THREE students who first had the opportunity to find out what that answer might be.

Dyer joined the pilot program in the summer of 2012, between his junior and senior years at St. Olaf. He had been preparing for medical school but remained uncertain whether medicine was actually the right path.

"The Rockswold Health Scholars Program was the confirmation I needed," Dyer says.

One experience during his first weeks at HCMC proved particularly formative. Dyer watched the burn surgery team care for a critically injured patient, an encounter that exposed him not only to what modern medicine could accomplish, but also to its limits and the vulnerabilities experienced by people on the margins of society.

"It opened my eyes to the ethical complexities sometimes present in the medical field," he recalls. "It was another step for me on the journey of committing my life to those who had very limited access to medical care."

That commitment eventually took him far beyond Minnesota. Dyer attended medical school at Creighton University, became a family medicine physician, and today works as a medical missionary at Kudjip Hospital in the highlands of Papua New Guinea.

In the years that followed that first summer, Rockswold Scholars would arrive at HCMC carrying the foundational question. For Andersen Wagner, that question had already become deeply personal before she even arrived.

The combination of research, clinical exposure, community, and reflection is intended to help Rockswold Health Scholars answer the question at the center of the program: What kind of difference do you want to make?

During her first year at St. Olaf, she passed out on campus and St. Olaf's student emergency medical technicians responded. Andersen Wagner resisted going to the hospital, but the EMTs insisted. Doctors ultimately discovered a blood clot in her lungs that could have proved fatal.

The following summer, she earned her own EMT license and spent the rest of college volunteering with the St. Olaf EMT service.









"It was very meaningful to be able to provide that kind of service to other people," she recounts. "It was actually very similar to what I do as an emergency department physician now."

When the political science major became a Rockswold Health Scholar in 2017, she discovered a setting in which her interests in medicine and political science didn't have to remain separate.

"I wanted to learn about the systemic factors as much as I wanted to learn about the medical practice," she shares. "Through Rockswold, I saw that it was working at a county hospital that I could combine those things — I could do medicine, I could learn about people's lives, I could learn about the influences of society on people."

Other scholars found their place in health care beyond the bedside.

When Ann Jensen '19 participated in the program in 2018, she already knew she did not want to become a physician. Her summer instead exposed her to the breadth of the health care system. She shadowed a prenatal program serving mothers experiencing addiction, researched barriers to behavioral health care for immigrants newly arriving in Minneapolis, and spent time with physicians and midwives in labor and delivery.

Then came a research assignment that would change her life.

"The most serendipitous encounter of my summer was a research project I did on a Medicaid 1115 Demonstration Waiver to secure state and federal funding for medical respite programs to support homeless patients after a hospital stay," Jensen recalls. "I did this research for HCMC's chief policy officer, who soon became a mentor to me."

Years later, that mentor — by then Nevada's Medicaid director — offered Jensen the opportunity to move from Washington, D.C., to Reno to lead the state's children's behavioral health transformation project.

Scan to watch how Oles draw upon their liberal arts education to approach careers in health care with curiosity, compassion, and critical thought.



Rockswold Health Scholars participate in a hands-on learning experience at Hennepin County Medical Center. They are guided through the medical simulation by a health care mentor, who provides direct feedback on their procedural performance.
PHOTO BY FERNANDO SEVILLA

In July 2025, she was appointed Nevada's Medicaid director herself.

"It is truly my dream job — and one that I would not have been able to achieve or succeed in without the Rockswold program," Jensen says.

Ivy Castillo '25 entered the program wondering whether she could create space for herself in medicine.

Castillo had been taking pre-med courses but was also considering academia and other health care professions. She felt that the Rockswold Health Scholars experience would give her enough proximity to the work of physicians to make the decision. Her placement in physical medicine and rehabilitation (PM&R) was particularly meaningful. As a child and teenager with cerebral palsy, Castillo had received care from PM&R specialists herself. Experiencing the field from the other side of the patient-provider relationship helped her to envision how she might someday provide that same care to others.

"Seeing the other side of this work allowed me to see the impact that I can make in this space," she says.

Anna Holten '17 experienced a similar moment of clarity during her weeks at HCMC — the exposure solidified both her desire to pursue medicine and her interest in orthopedic surgery. After earning her M.D. at Washington University in St. Louis, Holten returned to the same hospital where she had once been an undergraduate scholar.

She is now a chief orthopedic surgery resident at HCMC, alongside co-chief Ryan Hatch '17 — another former Rockswold Health Scholar.

The lessons Holten carried forward from her time in the program were not simply technical.

"Translating academic knowledge into medical treatment requires time, patience, and humility," she says. "Your knowledge base and technical skills are irrelevant if you cannot connect with people and meet them where they are. [My time in the Rockswold Health Scholars Program] made a career path in medicine and orthopedic surgery feel attainable, allowing me to envision myself as a resident serving the people of Minneapolis — I am incredibly grateful for the investment Dr. Rockswold made to open this path for myself and other scholars."

• • •

ROCKSWOLD WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN ABLE to provide this path of discovery without others willing to guide students still learning the craft.

"Anything that is really truly worthwhile doesn't happen without a village, without a lot of people with the same intention, the same motivation," he says.

Among that village are dozens of HCMC physicians, researchers, and staff members who have served as mentors over the past 15 years.

"Teaching is in the DNA of the staff at Hennepin," Rockswold says.

Sam Schulz '23, a first-generation college student who grew up in a farming family in rural Minnesota, knows how consequential that willingness to teach can become. During his summer at HCMC, he met Sam Jones, then a second-year neurosurgery resident. Schulz remembers arriving at the program still doubting whether he was really cut out for medicine. Jones had no such qualms.

"He was the first person who just made me feel like I was going to become a doctor," Schulz says.

The relationship did not end when Schulz's 10 weeks at HCMC did. Jones continued mentoring him as he applied to medical school. Years later, Schulz returned to the operating room with him as a medical student, and when Schulz decided he wanted to add a Ph.D. to his medical training, Jones introduced him to the principal investigator whose laboratory Schulz ultimately joined.

"Almost six years later, that connection is still very special to



Hennepin County Medical Center is a Level I adult and pediatric trauma center and safety net hospital located across the street from U.S. Bank Stadium in downtown Minneapolis.
PHOTO BY FERNANDO SEVILLA

me," Schulz says. "What I take from the Rockswold Health Scholars Program most is the people. The people who you meet care about you. They want you to succeed."

One of those members of that mentoring community is herself an Ole.

Hannah Brown '17 was not a Rockswold Health Scholar as a student, but she knew classmates who participated. A chemistry and political science double major, Brown spent two summers conducting research through the Collaborative Undergraduate Research and Inquiry Program (CURI) program at St. Olaf before earning a Ph.D. in chemistry and completing a fellowship in clinical chemistry.

She eventually found herself at HCMC, where she now serves as the medical director for clinical and forensic toxicology and as a principal investigator in the Cardiac Biomarkers Trials Laboratory.

About six months into her job, Brown received an unexpected email from one of her former St. Olaf professors asking whether she would be interested in mentoring a Rockswold Health Scholar.

> "You're only aware of the doors that you see in front of you. A good mentor helps make you aware of other doors and other possibilities that maybe you didn't even know were options."
>
> — Hannah Brown '17

"It was this perfect full-circle moment to me of always trying to find a way to give back to St. Olaf, which has done so much for me in my career," Brown says. "Now this is my second year with the program, and it is honestly one of the highlights of my whole year."

Brown's students receive a crash course in laboratory medicine, work through scientific papers with her, and meet regularly to discuss their research. She also helps to connect them with opportunities to shadow areas unique to HCMC, from the burn and poison centers to hyperbaric medicine.

Brown hopes her scholars leave with research skills and, when possible, a scientific publication. But she wants something more lasting as well.

"I hope that they leave with the confidence in themselves that they can ask an interesting question, do the work, and then communicate their results," Brown says. "And I hope that they also leave knowing that they have a mentor and people who are invested in their success and will always be here for them should they need continual guidance in the future."

For Brown, mentorship is personal. She credits mentors at St. Olaf and throughout her education with helping her discover possibilities she couldn't yet see for herself.

"You're only aware of the doors that you see in front of you," Brown says. "A good mentor helps make you aware of other doors and other possibilities that maybe you didn't even know were options."

Now she's doing the same for another generation of Oles.

Brown keeps mementos from the students she has mentored on a bookshelf in her office: photographs and thank-you notes from their summer together.

"I hope that in the next 15 years, there's an entire shelf of mine that is just full of Rockswold Health Scholars — because they have imparted so much on me, and I hope that I have done the same for them."

• • •

THAT CYCLE — STUDENTS ENTERING HENNEPIN County Medical Center unsure of where they belong, finding mentors who help them to chart new courses, and carrying those lessons into lives of service — was shown in a tour de force on July 31, when the Rockswold Health Scholars Program marked its 15th anniversary with a celebration on campus.

At the reception, Senior Development Officer Megan Larrabee Nelson '86 reflected on an adage she has often heard Rockswold share: We stand on the shoulders of those who have come before us.

The Rockswolds — Gaylan and his wife, Mary Garnaas Rockswold '63, P'90 '92 — have served as those shoulders, she told those gathered. Then, turning to the Rockswolds, she added: "Your vision to create immersive clinical experiences at Hennepin County Medical Center 15 years ago has challenged more than 90 St. Olaf students to view health care not just as a career, but as a calling."

The people gathered at the celebration offered a glimpse of what those 90-plus experiences have become: physicians and researchers, health policy leaders and business owners, mentors and postgraduate students.

"When I was applying to medical school, my interviewer said that in the 15 years that they've been doing their job, they've never seen anything like the Rockswold Health Scholars Program on an undergraduate application," Schulz shared with those assembled at the celebration.

For Rockswold, watching the paths of the Rockswold Health Scholars alumni unfold has become the most meaningful measure of what began with three students in 2012.

"It gives me hope for the future that these young, bright Oles are going into medicine and sometimes other areas," he says. "The world is going to need them."

And although the program bears his name, Rockswold is quick to resist the idea that its impact in any way belongs to him alone.

"You can't do anything by yourself," he says. "It takes a village — and St. Olaf happens to have a great one."

THE 43RD ANNUAL GIMSE GLOBAL



TOP AWARD

HOODED CROW AMONG THE TREES OF FLORENCE

Anna Thompson '28 | *In Frankenstein's Footsteps: The Keats-Shelley Circle* · Florence, Italy

ENGAGEMENT
PHOTO CONTEST



"In the Boboli Gardens of Florence, I had some free time to wander around and look for birds (I'm a big birdwatcher!), and I stumbled upon a group of luscious pines with the hills of Florence in the background. Within these trees, a branch was perfectly framed and seemed to be so carefully designed, as though a Romantic painter had picked up a brush and was waiting for a bird to perch. As I looked over the grove, a Hooded Crow began to caw, and it fluttered down to the exact perch I thought would be perfect. I took a picture, freezing the image of the Hooded Crow among the trees. The soft light, the pastel nature of the surroundings, and the near perfect symmetry is exactly what the Romantics desired to paint and write about."

— Anna Thompson '28

TOP AWARD

PASSING BIG BEN

Grace Nichols '26

University College in Dublin, Ireland

London, England

"Even at the famed Big Ben, the people and buses will still carry on with their lives, from morning into the night. Such is our nature."



FOR MORE THAN A HALF CENTURY, St. Olaf students have learned around the world as part of the college's renowned study abroad and study away programs. And for nearly that entire time, they have shared the stunning images they've captured during their travels as part of the annual Gimse Global Engagement Photo Contest.

The photo contest is named in honor of Professor Emeritus of Art A. Malcolm (Mac) Gimse '58 and his wife, Jackie. Together they planned, led, and taught 35 study-abroad programs and a dozen international January Term programs, helping hundreds of Oles develop an informed global perspective. Gimse chronicled their international travel through photography, and he encouraged students to do the same.

Advisors in what is now the Smith Center for Global Engagement at St. Olaf launched the photo contest in 1983 to encourage students to share a glimpse of their travels with the broader community. Each year students submit hundreds of photos to the contest.

At St. Olaf, the options for studying abroad and away are robust. The college offers programs in more than 40 countries around the world, including faculty-led semester programs like Global Semester, a wide range of January Term programs, and institutional partnerships around the globe. It's an opportunity that most St. Olaf students take advantage of, with 71 percent of the Class of 2026 participating in at least one study abroad or away program.

And students will soon have greater access to study around the world than ever before. A new $20 million gift from Louis and Mary Kay Smith, combined with existing scholarships, will enable Oles to participate in a semester-long study-abroad program for the same cost as attending class on campus. This transformative gift from the Smiths will also support the expansion and innovation of the college's study abroad and away programs.

In the meantime, Oles will continue photographing their experiences. See the world through their eyes in the photos from the 43rd Annual Gimse Global Engagement Photo Contest on the following pages.



HONORABLE MENTION

SACRED DOORS | **Ella Hansen '26** · *ENGL 231: Fiction in Florence*

"The Cimitero delle Porte Sante (Sacred Doors Cemetery) sits on the outskirts of central Florence, boasting a breathtaking view of the city. Tired and eager for dinner after our flights had landed earlier that afternoon, a few of us still ventured out to Porte Sante and a nearby piazza just as the sun was beginning to set. Whatever exhaustion we held quickly faded as we gazed over the sights of Florence and walked among the ornate neo-Gothic gates of the cemetery. Around us, as seen in the photo, lay the graves of dozens of influential Florentine artists, their names engraved in great detail on plant-embedded stone. Writers ourselves, we couldn't help but consider these bridges from our present to the past: the very people who informed the architecture, stories, and art of the area we would call home for the rest of January."



TOP AWARD

▲ SERENITY AT THE CLIFFS OF MOHER

Shen Rothermel '26 · *University College in Dublin, Ireland*

"When we first arrived at the Cliffs of Moher, we were initially disappointed, as it was rainy and windy. But fortunately, it cleared up quickly (and in fact almost dramatically) as the clouds rolled away to let sun rays come bursting through upon the rocks and waves. We spent much time admiring this gorgeous corner of Mother Nature."



HONORABLE MENTION

THROUGH THE LENS | **Sam Gering '27** · *DIS Copenhagen* ▶

"A friend takes a photo of the beautiful architecture found in Istanbul, and I take a photo of him. One of my courses that I completed in Copenhagen was *Photojournalism*, and this photograph became the basis for my entire body of work for that class. My final portfolio consisted of images of individuals (friends, family, strangers, and myself) taking photographs of prominent works of art, history, and culture found in various cities across the world — or, more simply put, 'pictures of other people taking pictures.'"



HONORABLE MENTION

▲ **HUMBLY** | **Sila Liljedahl '27** · *The Oregon Extension Program*
Jedediah Smith Redwoods State Park · Crescent City, Calif.

"Walking around the California redwoods without shoes on, finding little crevices to climb into and mountains of pine needles, leaning on bark that is hundreds of years older than us and feeling humble. Right after I took this photo, three of us climbed inside these ancient trees. It was like a human-sized fairy house, and the decay, rot, and fungi made it feel more alive than dead."

HONORABLE MENTION

▼ **A BLESSING** | **Sam Gering '27** · *DIS Copenhagen* · Vatican City, Italy

"Pope Leo XIV, head of the Catholic Church and sovereign of Vatican City, blesses a young child. After finishing my studies in Denmark, I was able to travel for a week afterward, visiting Spain, Italy, and the Vatican. Every Wednesday of the calendar year the Pope conducts a papal audience for any interested individual, and I was lucky enough to find a seat and capture photos of this very significant religious event."

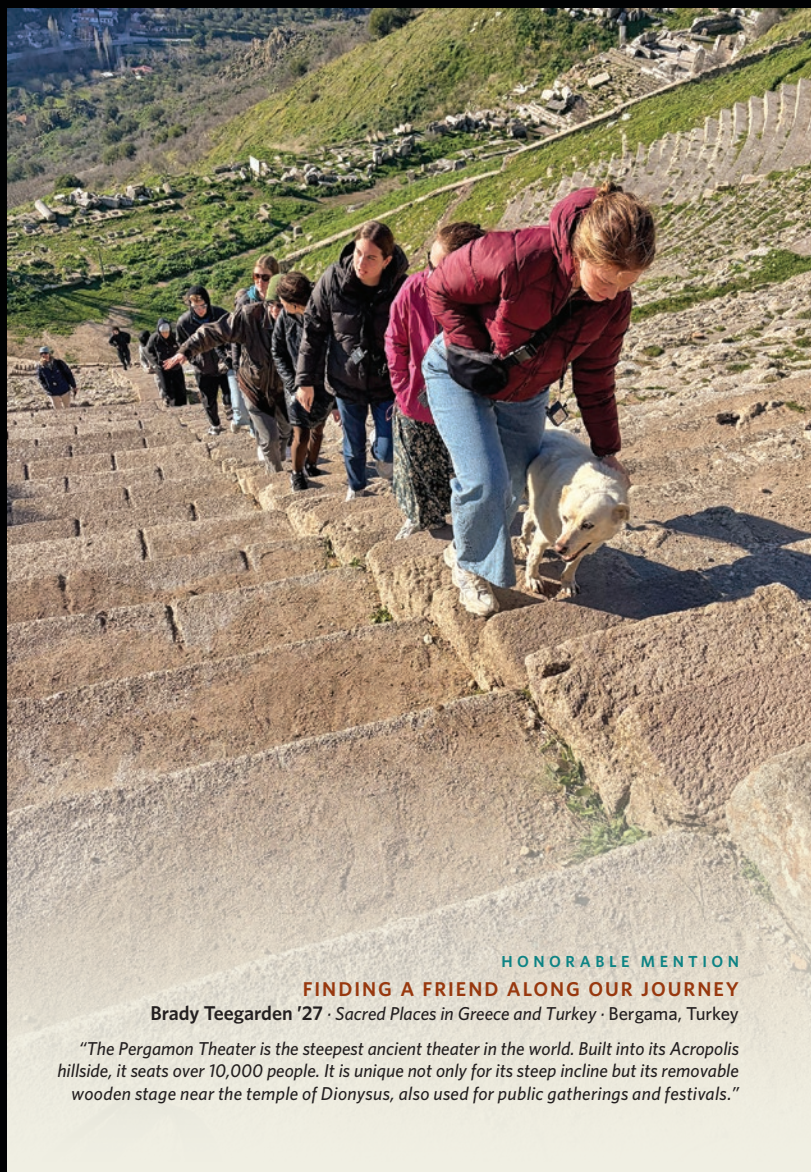




HONORABLE MENTION

CHASING THE SUNSET | **Sydney LaVoi '27** · *Middlebury in Mainz*

"I was in the Netherlands visiting a friend and former Ole who now studies in the city of Delft. This photo was taken from the highest balustrade of the city's main cathedral, which was only accessible by climbing an outrageously tall and skinny spiral staircase. I watched and listened as she pointed out places both nearby and in the distance, and told me some of their history."



HONORABLE MENTION

FINDING A FRIEND ALONG OUR JOURNEY
Brady Teegarden '27 · *Sacred Places in Greece and Turkey* · Bergama, Turkey

"The Pergamon Theater is the steepest ancient theater in the world. Built into its Acropolis hillside, it seats over 10,000 people. It is unique not only for its steep incline but its removable wooden stage near the temple of Dionysus, also used for public gatherings and festivals."



FROST AT GREEN LAKE | **Elijah Daniels '26**
University of Otago · Lake Pukaki, New Zealand

"Two other Oles, an abroad friend, and I biked 200 miles from the coast of southern New Zealand in order to make it to our final destination: Aoraki/Mount Cook. This journey lasted six days until it reached its apex at the shores of Lake Pukaki, with Aoraki in the distance."

SOARING OVER THE CLOUD PIERCER
Anika Lang '27 · *University of Otago*

"As I peered over the co-pilot's seat, Aoraki/Mount Cook — the 'cloud piercer' — stood cloudless above towering peaks and sprawling glaciers on this beautiful flight over Aoraki/Mount Cook National Park. In Ngāi Tahu tradition, Aoraki was the eldest son of Rakinui, the Sky Father. When his canoe struck a reef and turned to stone, Aoraki became the highest peak in Aotearoa New Zealand, while his brothers formed the surrounding Southern Alps."



JAZZLAND | **Andrew Baker '26** · *QUEST282: What is Europe?*

"Housed in the 500-year-old converted cellar of the Ruprechtskirche, Vienna's oldest extant church, it's jazz six nights a week at Jazzland!"



LOOK FOR FOXES | **Megan Davis '26** · *Musical Theater in Japan*

"We spent a whole day visiting shrines throughout Kyoto, so it was by chance that we explored Japan's most famous shrine, Fushimi Inari, at night. It was such a surreal experience, with countless unique views as the lamplight filtered through the posts of each gate, one after the next after the next. I almost expected to spy a mischievous fox spirit slipping between the shadows."



▲MURALS FOR MILES | **Jillian Ray '28**
CIEE January in Santiago: Culture and Cuisine · Valparaíso, Chile

"Walking down the winding streets of Valparaíso, my classmates and I were inspired by the murals and art covering nearly every square inch of each wall we passed; it seemed as if the artists viewed every surface as a canvas to share their passion with the world. The vibrant colors matched the port town's rich culture and made this special day trip an unforgettable experience."

▼MUSEUM MIRRORS | **Ella Hansen '26** · *ENGL 231: Fiction in Florence*

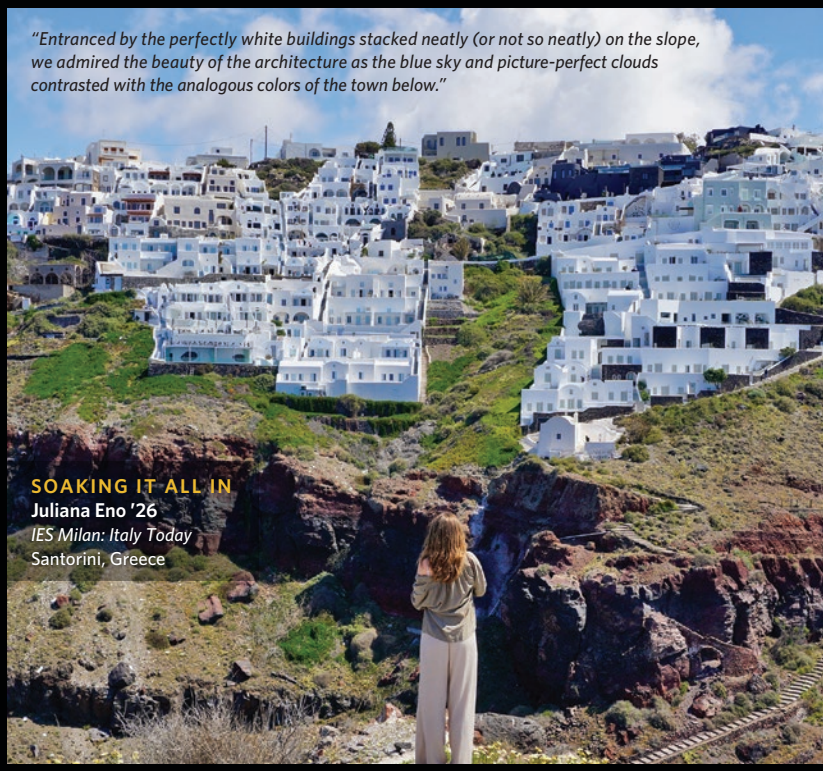
"Within the Uffizi Gallery there are perhaps hundreds of different representations of biblical figures, Mary Magdalene chief among them. However, as we approached this painting, a few of us turned to our classmate Cora, at once realizing how uncannily similar the visage of this Mary was to her own. Of course, we had to capture the moment as soon as possible, and so this photo, a mirror created within a museum, was taken. I'd photographed this Mary once before when I first visited the gallery, a time before Cora and I had met. How wonderful that there was something waiting in that picture for me to return to, now with a new friend and many new memories? I wondered, too, what this must have been like for Cora, to see someone so like herself produced centuries before she existed. We spent much of our trip replicating the poses and expressions of the art we saw; to see it replicate us was something else entirely."



A SIMPLER LIFE
Jesse Olson '27
One Health Nepal

"Sustainable agriculture is a staple of rural Nepali culture. This small home and farm is built into the hillside, with a breathtaking view of Fishtail Mountain in the background."





"Entranced by the perfectly white buildings stacked neatly (or not so neatly) on the slope, we admired the beauty of the architecture as the blue sky and picture-perfect clouds contrasted with the analogous colors of the town below."

SOAKING IT ALL IN
Juliana Eno '26
IES Milan: Italy Today
Santorini, Greece



◄RUSSELL GLACIER | **Grace Hansen '27** · *DIS Copenhagen* · Kangerlussuaq, Greenland

"My classmates and I spent five days in Kangerlussuaq, Greenland, to see the climate mechanisms in action and gain insight into their effects from the local people. One of our first hikes brought us to Russell Glacier on the edge of the ice sheet. Our guide spoke about changes the landscape had endured over the past decade: the glacier was noticeably shrinking, the rock moraines were far more visible, and a greater amount of meltwater was running along the ice. It was eye-opening to stand in front of such a monumental sheet of ice and imagine it larger — and incredibly impactful to imagine the potential shrinkage and corresponding effects in the years to come."

REMEMBERING AND HONORING

Mary Kay Smith

THE 43RD ANNUAL GIMSE GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT Photo Contest is dedicated to the memory of Mary Kay Smith, who passed away on September 26 at the age of 85.

After studying French in college — earning both a bachelor's degree from Rice University and a master's degree from Stanford University — Smith lived around the world with her husband, Louis. Throughout her life, she was passionate about travel, photography, languages, and education. Her deep dedication to ensuring that future generations have access to those same experiences came to life through her generous gifts to St. Olaf College.

In 2019 the Smiths established a $4.2 million endowed fund that supports student travel costs for international music tours, ensuring that members of the renowned St. Olaf Band, St. Olaf Choir, and St. Olaf Orchestra tour abroad at no cost. In 2022 they provided a $10.7 million gift to establish the Smith Center for Global Engagement, which supports students in developing global and intercultural skills through study abroad and away programs around the world. And just last year, they provided an incredible $20 million gift — the largest St. Olaf has ever received for academic programming — that enables St. Olaf students to participate in a semester-long study-abroad program for the same cost as attending class on campus.



"Thousands of Oles will get to see the world thanks to Mary Kay Smith's commitment to global engagement and exceptional generosity," says St. Olaf President Susan Rundell Singer. "There is perhaps no better way to honor her memory than through the glimpses of international study shared on these pages by Oles. Her life's passions will live on through them. Thank you, Mary Kay."



HOME | **Sage Koppana '28** · DIS Stockholm

"I went out for a walk at sunset, intent on capturing pictures of the newly bloomed flowers. I had to get creative, kneeling in muddy grass with my camera almost on the ground to get the angle I wanted. A little child dressed in red coveralls and followed by his apologetic father came over to me, curious about the strange girl kneeling in the mud. The short conversation that followed shaped my perspective of my time in Sweden greatly. I had been studying Swedish and doing well in class, but was hesitant to try speaking Swedish with strangers. Now I had no choice, and I surprised myself by holding a short but memorably funny conversation with a toddler. It was a small thing, but it made me feel like I could truly call Stockholm my home and encouraged me to use my Swedish with confidence."

Hitting All the Right Notes

EACH YEAR MEMBERS OF ST. OLAF'S MUSIC ENSEMBLES gather for their iconic "looking up" portraits, a decades-long tradition with a distinctly Ole perspective. Behind the camera today are two Oles who know these ensembles from both sides of the lens: Evan Pak '19, who has photographed performances on the Hill since his student days, and Steven Garcia '20, a former trumpet player in both the St. Olaf Orchestra and St. Olaf Band. Turns out, knowing your subjects helps — especially when everyone's looking up to you.



THE ST. OLAF JAZZ ORCHESTRA, conducted by Associate Professor of Music Joseph Jefferson, will host the inaugural Regional *Essentially Ellington* Festival in partnership with Jazz at Lincoln Center in March.

LEARN MORE



THE ST. OLAF BAND, conducted by Assistant Professor of Music Henry Dorn, will tour throughout Wyoming and Colorado in February.

GET YOUR TICKETS



THE ST. OLAF ORCHESTRA, conducted by Associate Professor of Music Chung Park, performed throughout the Midwest on its fall tour before concluding with a home concert on October 18.

WATCH THE CONCERT



THE ST. OLAF CHOIR, conducted by Harry R. and Thora H. Tosdal Professor of Music Anton Armstrong '78, will tour throughout Washington, Oregon, and California in February.

GET YOUR TICKETS

Through the Lens: A Homecoming Weekend Tradition

By Evan Pak '19

KAYLA GRUENES '27 and her dad, Paul, love Homecoming Weekend. They're always in the stands at the football game, wearing Ole gear and cheering exuberantly for every touchdown.

St. Olaf social media followers and website visitors likely know their faces, as they've been featured in homecoming photos each year since 2023. Before that year's game, I snapped a few quick shots of the two of them picking up Ole swag and sitting together in the stands. I later learned that they were both surprised and excited to see themselves featured online.

In 2024 I was again photographing the football game for the college, making sure to grab shots of the most spirited fans. I didn't realize that I had photographed the two of them again until sorting through the photos at home. Once again, the two of them were featured prominently on the website and social media. Later that year, Kayla shared that the shots are among her favorite photos with her dad, which is perhaps the most rewarding feedback any photographer can receive.

In 2025 I didn't have to look long for the pair. They carried the same energy as previous years, decked out in St. Olaf regalia and showing their love for the football team. Those photos joined the ones from previous years online.

Now, school spirit is more than just a fall activity for Kayla. As a co-director of the St. Olaf Programming Board, she's responsible for planning more than 100 events and activities throughout the year. This year's football game saw her giving out cookies, cowbells, and other merch to fans entering the stands. Then, in a relatively new halftime tradition, she and other Programming Board members threw dozens of burgers to the Oles in attendance.

Since 2026 was Kayla's last homecoming as a student, I knew that I needed to get one more batch of photos of her and her dad. This time we actually arranged a shoot, working our way around campus while reminiscing about previous homecomings. I really enjoyed hearing about how much the photos have meant to them each year and how excited they were for the photos this fall.

After Kayla graduates next spring, I'm looking forward to seeing her joining the other alumni who return every year for the fall festivities — just like I do. Um! Yah! Yah!















HOMECOMING AND FAMILY WEEKEND 2026

HOME IS WHERE THE HILL IS

PHOTOS BY BRANDON CASH '16 AND EVAN PAK '19

































BUILDING CHAMPIONS ON THE HILL

A glimpse of the successes of St. Olaf Athletics this fall.

MEN'S SOCCER | St. Olaf earned its first No. 1 regular-season ranking in program history and spent three consecutive weeks in the top spot starting in late September.

WOMEN'S SOCCER | St. Olaf began the season on a nine-game unbeaten streak (6-0-3), which was its longest to start a season since 2011.

VOLLEYBALL | St. Olaf landed its highest national ranking (No. 21) since 2011 in late September, and went on to top No. 4 University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire in mid-October.

FOOTBALL | The Oles defeated Augsburg by a 23-21 score on a last-second field goal by Patrick Gardner '29 as part of Homecoming and Family Weekend on October 3.

MEN'S GOLF | St. Olaf posted its lowest team scoring average (303.6) for a fall in at least 15 years.

WOMEN'S GOLF | St. Olaf shot its first-ever sub-300 round in the final round of the MIAC Championships, capping a fall where the Oles broke their single-round scoring record four times.

MEN'S CROSS COUNTRY | The Oles extended their program-record streak in the national rankings to 72 weeks in late September.

WOMEN'S CROSS COUNTRY
St. Olaf set a new program record by stretching its streak in the national rankings to 56 consecutive polls in mid-October.

PHOTOS BY MIKE BOSTROM
St. Olaf Creative and Digital Media Strategist

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

Carol V. Johnson '54, the first woman to be named vice president of St. Olaf College, died on June 11. After majoring in English and history at St. Olaf, Johnson earned a master's degree in counseling and administration from the University of Minnesota. She devoted her career to working with young people, and served for 28 years in the Student Life Division at St. Olaf. She helped transform her role as dean of women into the dean of students, shifting the work to be more inclusive and encompassing all students. She further helped break barriers when she assumed the role of vice president of student life. Former President David Anderson '74 recalls that Johnson "exuded a warmth and graciousness that welcomed everyone around her into conversation and put them at ease. At the same time, she had the fortitude and common sense to serve with distinction for many years in one of the most challenging roles at the college. Her leadership made St. Olaf a stronger and better place." Johnson also had a special gift for hospitality, which she used to assist the college in hosting guests at special college events. She was an avid walker, golfer, and appreciated art and classical music. After her retirement in 1994, she could be found as a volunteer in the development office at the college, at St. John's Lutheran Church, and at the Senior Center in Northfield. Johnson was devoted to her family and was guided by faith and service, living out her calling with enthusiasm and conviction.



1960s

Douglas "Doug" Blanchard '67, retired division chief of planetary science at NASA's Johnson Space Center in Houston, died on May 27 from complications after hip surgery. A veteran of the Vietnam War, Blanchard accepted a position at NASA in 1973. Trained as a geochemist, Blanchard spent 25 years in NASA's planetary science organization before moving to space life science. For nine years, he was the curator of lunar samples, taking care of moon rocks, cosmic dust, and meteorites recovered from Antarctica. During his tenure, scientists discovered what they thought to be fossil remains in a Martian rock, suggesting that life once existed on Earth's closest neighbor. Their work suddenly became front page news.

Blanchard believed his education as a chemistry major at St. Olaf helped prepare him for the important questions his work would bring up. "St. Olaf exposed me to the world of ideas, of philosophy and art. I look back on my St. Olaf years and marvel about how much the veil lifted," he told *St. Olaf Magazine* in 2006. Blanchard also hosted St. Olaf students at NASA who were participating in the Piper Center's Houston Connections Program.

After retiring from his 35-year career, Blanchard volunteered for Habitat for Humanity, building homes each Thursday and Saturday and serving on the board of directors. He was a lifelong athlete, running track and playing football in high school and college. He later ran marathons, coached his kids' soccer teams, taught Sunday School with his wife Judith, and poured his heart into staying healthy as long as possible through Rock Steady Boxing, a rehab program designed for people with Parkinson's disease, and biking the Winter Garden (Florida) trail. He was devoted to his wife, **Judith Helseth Blanchard '67**, and their family, who will cherish his memory and life lessons.



Doug Blanchard '67 gives Oles a tour of NASA's Johnson Space Center in 2013.

Rebecca Rottsolk '69, co-founder and artistic director of Seattle's Mirinesse Women's Choir, will retire at the end of this concert season. Seattle's choral community has proudly recognized her extraordinary legacy, and her impact on women's choral music, locally and nationally, noting "Rebecca has taught generations of girls that women are strong, that our voices matter, and that music can communicate that strength with breathtaking clarity. That kind of lifelong influence is rare, and it speaks to the depth of her artistry, her leadership, and her belief in the power of women's voices."

1970s

Elizabeth Ericksen Luttio '73 writes, "I am retired!" Her musical, *Elizabeth and Mary*, premiered on July 25 and 26 in Henderson, Nev., with the four principal roles performed by Las Vegas opera professionals and accompanied by flute, piano, and string trio. 1 Luttio wrote the script about two pregnant women who spent three months together and the challenges they faced. She also composed the songs, orchestrated by Shane Jensen. The musical received a standing ovation from a sold-out audience. ■ **Susan Black Narayan '76** and **Liz Dahlstrom '76** were sorry to miss their 50th class reunion, but were thinking of the Class of 1976 classmates in May when they met up in Lillehammer, Norway. 2

1980s

Sue Gram Grudt '83 writes that she is thrilled to celebrate her 10th year as minister of worship and music at Evangelical Lutheran Church of All Saints (ELCA) in Fox Lake, Ill. "After graduation from LSTC and my ordination in 1993, I've served five churches in three synods. I've been blessed to share my gifts of music and worship leadership, all finely developed at St. Olaf, in each parish." ■ **Laurie Iudin-Nelson '84**, who retired from Luther College in 2021 as a professor emerita of Russian Studies, has graduated from Wartburg Theological Seminary with her MDiv and was ordained as Minister of Word and Sacrament. She currently serves as pastor of Our Savior's Lutheran Church (ELCA) in Osage, Iowa. ■ **Jon Knuths '84 and Beth Van de Ven Knuths '84** recently hosted a group of Oles and their spouses for the third annual St. Olaf Alumni of the Verdes Happy Hour. 3 Pictured are **Steve Bergeson '75**, **Mark Stonacek '88**, **Beth Van de Ven Knuths '84**, **Jon Knuths '84**, **Lois Qualley Halberg '64**, **Chuck Halberg '64**, **Lynne Johnson Nelson '82**, **Martha Nause '77**, **Chris Nelson '86**, **Vanessa Seljeskog '78**, **Brian Johnson '80**, **Susan McGrory Smith '80**, and **Don Smith '80**. ■ **Danel Olson '87** recently launched The Eiffel Awards in honor of the 130th anniversary of the world's first film matinee, which was shown in Paris. The Eiffel Awards are meant to honor exceptional books that dive into the art and craft of worldwide filmmaking. Winners of the inaugural Eiffel Award include Margot Robbie, Stanley Fish, Josh Brolin, and Al Pacino. ■ **Brian Teasley '87** writes, "I'm happy to report that a St. Olaf math major has published a literary work, titled *The Old Cat and the Tree,* and it is featured in the Ernest Hemingway Home and Museum bookstore in Key West, Florida."



1



2



3

The team that started a dynasty

AS MEMBERS OF THE ST. OLAF COLLEGE Class of 1976 celebrated their 50th anniversary, 10 classmates reflected on an experience that helped change the course of Ole Athletics: their time together on the men's swimming and diving team.

Before 1972, St. Olaf had captured just two conference swimming titles, in 1927 and 1928, and shared another in 1955. That began to change in fall 1972, when eight talented first-year swimmers joined an experienced group of upperclassmen under the guidance of Coach Bill Mainerich, who were determined to raise the program's expectations.

Their breakthrough came at the spring conference championship. St. Olaf and perennial champion Ripon College remained separated by only a few points throughout the two-day meet. Entering the final relay, the championship came down to one race: if Ripon won, it would take the title.

Instead, the Oles surged past Ripon at the finish, securing St. Olaf's first outright conference championship in 45 years.

The following season, two more members of the Class of 1976 joined the team, and the Oles were once more crowned as conference champions — proving their breakthrough was no fluke.

The program's rise continued under coaches David Hauck and, later, his son Bob Hauck '87. St. Olaf went on to win 23 MIAC titles over a 25-year span and became a force at the NCAA Division III Championships.

What began with a group of young Oles in 1972 grew into decades of dominance — a dynasty built on teamwork, belief, and a championship that showed what St. Olaf swimming would become.

— MARSH HALBERG '76 and REED WAHLBERG '76





■ **Kent Johnson '87** *(at left in the photo)* and **Bob Levi '88** 1 trekked Nepal's Annapurna Circuit in April, nearly 40 years after visiting Nepal together as part of the Global Semester program in the fall of 1986. ■ **The 1985–86 St. Olaf Term in the Far East** group held a 40-year reunion October 9–12 at a lodge on Lake Mille Lacs, with 16 of the original 24 participants (including revered leaders Professor Emerita of Religion and Asian Studies Barbara Reed and her husband, Gary Davison). As with each of their reunions, the bond that they formed while exploring Japan, Taiwan, Hong Kong, China, and especially Thailand, led to a natural feeling of spiritual, emotional, and social togetherness, even after many years of physical separation. *Front row (L–R)* 2*:* **Mary Shaw '87**, **Deborah Swenson '87**, Gary Davison, Professor Emerita Barbara Reed, **Heidi Graf '86**, **Juanita Buss '86**. *Back row:* **Eric Kirkegaard '87**, **Mark Cook '85**, **Thor Anderson '87**, **Carrie Roth Frantzich '86**, **Lindsay Paine '86**, **Sandy Gangelhoff '86**, **Stephanie Halleen '86**, **Scott Hable '85**, **Jay Kinn '85**, and **Lisa Monson Ruehlow '87**.

1990s

Jennifer Cutsinger Reilly '94 was promoted to senior vice president and chief human resources officer of Honeywell Technologies on July 1, 2026. Reilly holds a master's degree in Human Resources and Industrial Relations from the University of Minnesota. ■ **Shannon Roper Anderson '95** has been named the new superintendent of the Oregon School District (OSD) in Oregon, Wis. Beyond her work in the OSD, Anderson teaches classes at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and Edgewood College, and serves on the Oregon Area Food Pantry Board of Directors. In addition to her St. Olaf B.A., she holds two master's degrees and a Ph.D. in Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis from UW-Madison. ■ **David Benson '96** writes, "I'm incredibly honored to have been named chief executive officer of GO2 for Lung Cancer, a national nonprofit dedicated to transforming survivorship and improving the lives of everyone affected by lung cancer. In this role, I'll have the opportunity to work alongside an extraordinary team and community to accelerate research, expand access to screening and high-quality care, strengthen patient support, advance advocacy, and build partnerships that improve outcomes for patients and families. After nearly three decades working in the cancer community, I'm particularly energized by the remarkable progress being made in lung cancer detection and treatment. The burden of lung cancer remains unacceptably high, but so does our opportunity to change its future." ■ **Jess Fox '98** and a group of friends from the Class of 1998 traveled to Portugal together to celebrate their 50th birthdays and more than 30 years of friendship that started at St. Olaf. 3 The photo was taken at Porto Cathedral. *Pictured (L-R):* **Amy Vavak '98**, **Jess Fox '98**, **Alyssa Kunau '98**, **Rebecca Putnam Newton '98**, and **Shannon Barry '98**.

2000s

Katherine Gibson-Corley '01 has been appointed director of the Division of Comparative Medicine in Vanderbilt University Medical Center's Department of Pathology, Microbiology and Immunology. A professor and comparative pathologist, Gibson-Corley brings expertise in translational research and a strong track record in leadership, collaboration, and mentorship. She will lead the division's academic mission, advancing interdisciplinary research and training to improve the health and well-being of both humans and animals. Gibson-Corley received her doctoral degrees in veterinary medicine and in veterinary pathology from Iowa State University. ■ **Kelsey Kreider Starrs '03 and David Starrs '02** are celebrating the fifth anniversary of their business, The Healing House, a shared office space and collaborative community for mental health practitioners. The Minneapolis business also includes a nonprofit arm called The Healing House Fund that provides







reduced-cost therapy to people impacted by economic injustice. "The Healing House is a unique model in the world of mental health, in that each of our providers owns and runs their own practice, yet we are held together by shared values and a commitment to co-creating a supportive community with one another," Kreider Starrs says.

She notes that she majored in social work and women's studies at St. Olaf, while her husband, David Starrs, was a political science and economics major. "When we met post–Olaf in 2024, our friends (and even professors **Mary Carlsen '79** and Paul Wojick!) were as curious as we were about what could come from the improbable pairing of a bleeding heart social worker and a free market economist," she says. "In 2021 we got our answer when The Healing House came to life. Our professional partnership is the perfect integration of our unique skills and talents, as well as the embodiment of what it means to be an Ole. We even had a St. Olaf social work intern help run the Healing House Fund at one time!" ■ **Jocelyn Hagen Takach '03** has a new album titled *Here I Am: Choral Music of Jocelyn Hagen*. 1 The album is performed by the Grammy-winning True Concord Voices & Orchestra under conductor Eric Holtan, with soprano Susanna Phillips and the Tucson Girls Chorus. The album pairs two large-scale multimedia works: *The Notebooks of Leonardo da Vinci* (receiving its world-premiere recording and performed live more than 75 times around the world since 2019) and the title work, *Here I Am* — a multimedia symphony for choirs, soprano soloist, chamber orchestra, and illuminated portraits. *Here I Am* was inspired by Holtan's suggestion that Hagen should write a piece celebrating the women's suffrage movement and the centennial of the 19th Amendment in 2020. This piece is performed with live concert projections of portraits of 47 inspiring women from across the world and across time, whose words form the libretto. ■ **Julia Kelto Lillis '04** has been promoted to associate professor with tenure at Union Theological Seminary in New York City. She received awards from two academic organizations for her first book, and is working on the next book with support from an American Council of Learned Societies Fellowship. ■ **Caitlin Harris '05** was elected Chief of Hospital Medicine in 2026 at Kettering Health, a faith-based family of medical centers, emergency centers, and outpatient facilities in Kettering, Ohio. ■ **Rev. Christie Melby-Gibbons '05** shares that she is celebrating 10 years since she opened Tricklebee Café, Wisconsin's first pay-what-you-can community café. 2 "We offer healthy meals, food service training, and spiritual nourishment to anyone, regardless of their ability to pay. We are part of a network called One World Everybody Eats," Melby-Gibbons writes. "It is a magical place run by the generosity of others through financial contributions, their time as volunteers, and their in-kind donations (and by grants). We have grown immensely since opening a decade ago." Melby-Gibbons became an ordained Moravian minister in 2009 and served a Moravian church in Southern California for several years. "It was there that I really got into rescuing food before it goes into the waste stream," she notes. ■ **Max Wojtanowicz '06** celebrates 10 years of being cancer-free with a return engagement this fall of his one-man show, *Ball: A Musical Tribute To My Lost Testicle*, about his journey with stage 3 testicular cancer. 3 The show premiered at the 2016 Minnesota Fringe and was selected for the 2018 United Solo Festival in New York, the world's largest solo theater festival. In September it played a limited engagement at Artistry Theater in Bloomington, Minn. ■ **Andrea Horbinski '07** writes, "My book, *Manga's First Century: How Creators and Fans Made Japanese Comics, 1905–1989*, won the 2026 Eisner Award for Best Academic/Scholarly Work. 4 The Will Eisner Comic Industry Awards are considered the Oscars of the comics world. Named for the pioneering comics creator and graphic novelist Will Eisner, the awards are given out in over 30 categories during a ceremony held each year at Comic-Con International in San Diego." ■ **Nicholas Klemetson '07** has earned the Doctor of Pastoral Music degree from the Perkins School of Theology at Southern Methodist University. His thesis, titled "Oh That I Had a Dozen Voices: Accessible Music for Volunteer Church Choirs," earned distinction from his advisory committee. ■ **Ellen Roth '08** and 13 Oles from the Class of 2008 collectively celebrated their 40th birthdays with a trip to Breckenridge, Colorado! 5 *Pictured (L-R):* **Charlotte Darling '08**, **Kate Dobie '08**, **Annie Gatzlaff '08**, **Emily Hennig '08**, **Leah Klister '08**, **Ellen Roth '08**, **Rachel Carlin Rosen '08**, **Molly Nelson Sanford '08**, **Amy Sonnichsen '08**, **Natalie Spencer '08**, **Julie Boehmer Van Grol '08**, **Sarah Wallis '08**, **and Margit Ahmann Wilson '08**.

2010s

Caroline Groth '12 received tenure and was promoted to associate professor at West Virginia University School of Public Health, effective August 14, 2026. ■ **Bao Lee '12**, a community organizer in Little Canada, Minn., is a 2026 Bush Fellow. Her work reimagines how Hmong women are cared for across every stage of life. Lee, director of programs and operations at Minnesota Voice, has helped build statewide infrastructure for grassroots organizations, aligning funding, strategy, and partnerships. During the COVID-19 pandemic and Operation Metro Surge, she launched mutual aid efforts and coordinated direct support for communities. She was also a founding board member of Transforming Generations, which supports

1


2


3


4


5














Hmong and Southeast Asian survivors through advocacy, healing and community-centered care. She plans to study global models of care while strengthening her leadership in nonprofit development, systems change, and community healing. ■ **Eden Ehm '13** writes, "Every summer, Oles of all kinds — students, alumni, professors, faculty, family, and friends — gather together at the Hardanger Fiddle Association of America annual workshop to learn and celebrate Norwegian folk music and dance traditions." 1 ■ **Maddie Lee '16** joined former Ole swimmers **Hannah Hein '17**, **Claire Walters '17**, **Annika Pohlman '18**, **Emily Maruyama '18**, and **Andrew Atwood '18** to compete in the Trans Tahoe Relay, a 10+ mile swim across Lake Tahoe, in July. 2 They finished with a time of 4:47.54. ■ **Henry Burt '16** took a position as assistant professor of spiritual and pastoral care at the Earlham School of Religion in Richmond, Ind., on July 1, 2026. The Earlham School of Religion is the premier Quaker seminary in the United States, and is the affiliated graduate school of Earlham College. In this new role, Burt will wear both his pastoral hat — ordained as a Lutheran pastor in Boe Chapel in the winter of 2025 — and his scholarly hat — a Ph.D. grad of Princeton Theological Seminary in 2025 and a recent postdoc faculty member at Flagler College in St. Augustine, Fla.

2020s

Catherine Gilbert '20 received her Doctor of Philosophy in Crop Sciences from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign in May 2026. 3 Gilbert specializes in computational agronomy. Her dissertation, "Enviromic Methods for the Characterization of Growing Environments," helps turn complex agronomic and environmental data into better predictions and decisions, improving crop management, resource efficiency, and resilience across variable growing conditions. ■ **Sofia Reed van Dover '20** earned her J.D. degree in May 2026 from the University of Minnesota Law School and is excited to share that she is joining Ballard Spahr as an associate this fall. ■ **Jessie Camp '21** 4 was ordained as a deacon in the ELCA in January 2026. ■ **Sarah Hilst '23** recently graduated from DePaul University College of Law with a J.D. degree and a certificate in International and Comparative Law. 5 She focused her studies on business law and international human rights, and in September she began her legal career as an attorney in the Chicago office of Ashurst Perkins Coie.

'The Hottest Thing in Every Freezer'

JONNYPOPS ARE "SUDDENLY the hottest thing in every freezer," noted a recent story in the *Wall Street Journal* — and we're proud that they were in our freezers here on the Hill first.

Connor Wray '14 and **Erik Brust '14** founded JonnyPops as students in 2012, making their fruit-based pops in the basement of Mohn Hall and selling them at the Cage. They went on to win the inaugural Ole Cup student entrepreneurial pitch competition in 2014 and are now a multi-million dollar business with products available at major retailers like Target and Costco.



"Participating in the Ole Cup was essential to getting JonnyPops off the ground," Brust told *St. Olaf Magazine* for a story on the 10th anniversary of the competition. "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."



JonnyPops founders Connor Wray '14 and Erik Brust '14

On the Shelf

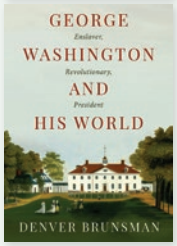


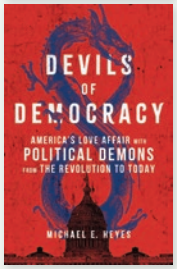














BOOKS BY ST. OLAF COLLEGE ALUMNI, FACULTY & STAFF

The Tree of Seven Sisters: Seven Loving Lessons (Halo Publishing International, 2025), by **Elliot A. Herland '80** and **Lauren K. Herland '19**

Stormy Road: Reawakening From Stroke and Aphasia (Palmetto Publishing, 2026), by **Rochelle Anderson '81**

Jubilee: The First Therapy Horse and an Olympic Dream (Capstone Editions, 2022), by **KT Johnston '83**

The Old Cat and the Tree: The Adventures of a Hemingway Home Cat (Self-published, 2024), by **Brian Teasley '87**

A Home for All (Building a Moral Economy, 3) (Fortress Press, 2026), by **Laura Stivers '87**

Kind Karl: A Little Crocodile with Big Feelings (Bala Kids, 2025), by Sharon Salzberg and **Jason Gruhl '92**

Vessels (Unsolicited Press, 2024), by **Robert van Vliet '93**

George Washington and His World: Enslaver, Revolutionary, President (Oxford University Press, 2026), by **Denver Brunsman '97**

Your Guide to Safer Travel: Travel Confidently by Understanding the Threats You Might Face, and How to Avoid and Respond to Danger (Independently published, 2026), by **A. Yohann de Silva '99**

Powerless: Enhanced Wars Book 3 (Independently published, 2026), by **Jim Struble '02**

The Wanderer's Apprentice (Self-published, 2026), by **Johannes Mauritzen '04**

Devils of Democracy: America's Love Affair with Political Demons from the Revolution to Today (Broadleaf Books, 2026), by **Michael Heyes '04**

The Vision (Vanguard Press, 2026), by **Julie Asparro '14**

Marra's Star (1010 Publishing, 2025), by Maria Mackas (author) and **Marra Mackas Evans '16** (illustrator)

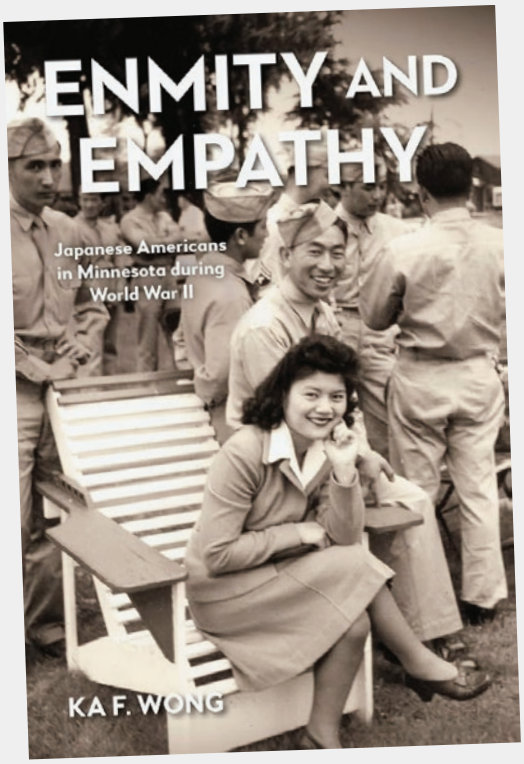
St. Olaf Professor of Asian Studies Ka Wong wins Minnesota Book Award

By Olivia Schmidt

ST. OLAF PROFESSOR OF ASIAN STUDIES and Director of Asian Conversations Ka Wong received the Emilie Buchwald Award for Minnesota Nonfiction at the 2026 Minnesota Book Awards, in recognition of his book *Enmity and Empathy: Japanese Americans in Minnesota During World War II.*

Wong is the first faculty member in the St. Olaf Asian Studies Department to receive this award.

Published by the Minnesota Historical Society Press, Wong's book details the lives of the Japanese Americans who left incarceration camps to resettle in Minnesota after the war. Their stories — of injustice, solidarity, and ultimately resilience — reveal how the state became a meaningful site in the broader narrative of wartime displacement and civil rights.



"These are powerful, often heartbreaking stories — fascinating and historically significant — yet still too little known. This book is an effort to bring them to light."

— KA WONG

The project began as a Collaborative Undergraduate Research and Inquiry (CURI) program collaboration with students Hikari Sugisaki '17 and Paul Sullivan '17, eventually developing into the documentary *Beyond the Barbed Wire: Japanese Americans in Minnesota,* before expanding into a book.

"This book tells the story of courageous Japanese American trailblazers who left incarceration camps during World War II and rebuilt their lives in Minnesota, persevering through hostility and hardship," Wong says. "Their struggles were not endured alone, however. Overcoming the wartime challenges and chaos required a collective effort; it was not only Japanese Americans, but also their allies — educators, religious groups, military personnel, nonprofit volunteers, and everyday individuals — who stepped forward, spoke out, and stood in solidarity during some of the nation's darkest hours."

Wong emphasizes the urgency of preserving these histories, particularly as members of the generation who experienced the war firsthand continue to pass away. He hopes the book will encourage readers to recognize the diverse communities that have shaped Minnesota's history and reflect on the enduring importance of empathy and camaraderie.

Read a Q&A with Wong by scanning this QR code or visiting *stolaf.edu/magazine.*

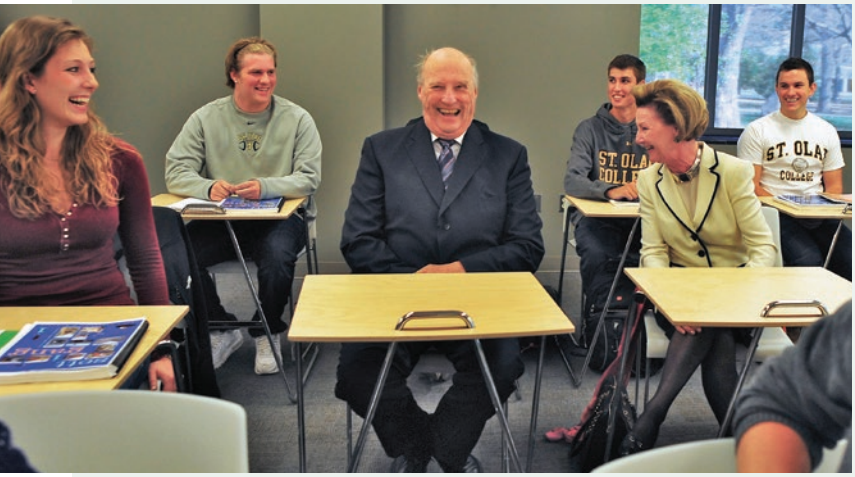
Remembering King Harald V of Norway

By Kari VanDerVeen

AS A COLLEGE WITH DEEP AND ENDURING TIES TO NORWAY, St. Olaf mourns the death of His Majesty King Harald V. He died on August 28 in Oslo at age 89.

"Generations of Norwegian immigrants and their descendants shaped our college and campus community. King Harald understood the importance of this connection and heritage while also embracing a shared sense of responsibility for the future," says St. Olaf President Susan Rundell Singer.

Generations of St. Olaf students have also had the opportunity to meet the king on campus. Over the decades, King Harald V visited St. Olaf on three separate occasions. He first visited the college as Crown Prince in 1965. After acceding to the throne, he returned to campus in 1995 alongside Queen Sonja of Norway and was awarded an honorary doctorate. Their Majesties King Harald V and Queen Sonja of Norway visited St. Olaf again in 2011 as part of their official state visit to the United States. While on campus, Their Majesties toured the recently opened Tomson Hall, visited a Norwegian language class, and attended a *Sammenkomst* (gathering) held in their honor.



"One of the most touching photos of that visit is of His Majesty sitting in a desk in that Norwegian class, laughing heartily alongside our students. It underscored his appreciation for education and joy at the way the Norwegians who founded St. Olaf created a lasting appreciation for his country's culture, language, and values. We will honor his memory by continuing to do this work," Rundell Singer says.

Another way that Oles can honor his memory is to listen to *Grand Fanfare*. When retired St. Olaf Orchestra Conductor Steven Amundson learned that His Majesty King Harald V would need a fanfare for his entrance to the Oslo Opera House during the St. Olaf Choir and St. Olaf Orchestra's joint tour of Norway in 2019, he composed an original piece of music in the king's honor, which the St. Olaf Orchestra performed just a few days later.

Listen to the piece by scanning the QR code to the right or by searching on YouTube for "Grand Fanfare" by the St. Olaf Orchestra and St. Olaf Choir.



ST. OLAF ALUMNI & FAMILY TRAVEL

St. Olaf Alumni and Family Travel helps you be a culturally competent, global learner through adventures alongside like-minded travelers. A few upcoming programs are listed below.

Norway: Oslo, Bergen, and the Gridiron
A St. Olaf Football Companion Tour
May 28–June 5, 2027
Hosted by Jordy Borman and Katie Howard '22

Nordic Harmonies: Art, *Friluftsliv*, and the St. Olaf Choir
A St. Olaf Choir Companion Tour
May 31–June 11, 2027
Led by Michon and David Weeks

Music and Culture in Norway
A St. Olaf Choir Companion Tour
June 7–17, 2027
Led by Louis and Maggie Epstein

Fall Interlude: Renaissance Splendor in Florence
November 14–21, 2027
Hosted by Ellen Draeger Cattadoris '07

Egypt and the Eternal Nile
16 Days in February or March 2028
Hosted by Joshua Lee

The Silk Road: Stories of Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan
May 20–31, 2028
Led by Karil Kucera and Daniel Jones

LEARN MORE AT ***stolaf.edu/travel***








Future Oles

Becca Trombly Burgess '06 and David Burgess, a son, William
Rachel Schwabe-Fry Lowe '10 and Thomas Lowe, twins, Natalie and Amy
Bjorn Paulson '10, twins, Charlotte and Lars
Katherine Horvat Teiken '10 and Jason Teiken '10, a daughter, Edith 1
Sara Zieglmeier Hall '11 and Matthew Hall, a daughter, Caroline 2
Emily Quinnell Tolly '11 and Brian Tolly '10, twins, James and Claire 3
Amanda Balgaard '12 and Jonathan Harms '12, a daughter, Avery 4
Lindsay Kubina Lanz '12 and Zack Lanz, a daughter, Addison 5
Cameron Lis Marcott '12 and Meredith Lis Marcott, a son, Sasha 6
Morgan Smith '12 and Chase Liaboe '12, a daughter, Marlo 7
Rebecca Gobel Menssen '14 and Ryan Menssen '14, a daughter, Emma 8
Mike Stralka '14 and Marinna Nash, a daughter, Freya 9
Rachel Bash Baker '15 and Will Baker, a daughter, Frederic
Emily Kvasnicka Friedrichsen '15 and Paul Kvasnicka Friedrichsen '15, a son, Henry 10
Will Lutterman '15 and Rachel McGovern, a son, Benjamin 11
Hannah Besonen Rolfs '16 and Zach Rolfs '15, a son, Nolan 12
Emily Een Varley '16 and Eric Varley '15, a son, Reid
Annie Weinheimer '16 and Henry Raether '15, a daughter, Quinn 13
Valerie Wilk Drewes '17 and Isaac Drewes '17, a daughter, Eliza
Jake Guenther '17 and Taylor Guenther, a daughter, Addison 14
Alanna Vollands Sweeney '18 and Stephen Sweeney '15, a son, Simon 15
Rosie Linsner Tylutki '18 and Matthew Tylutki '18, a son, William 16





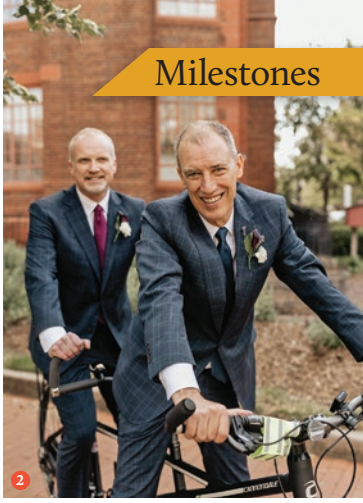






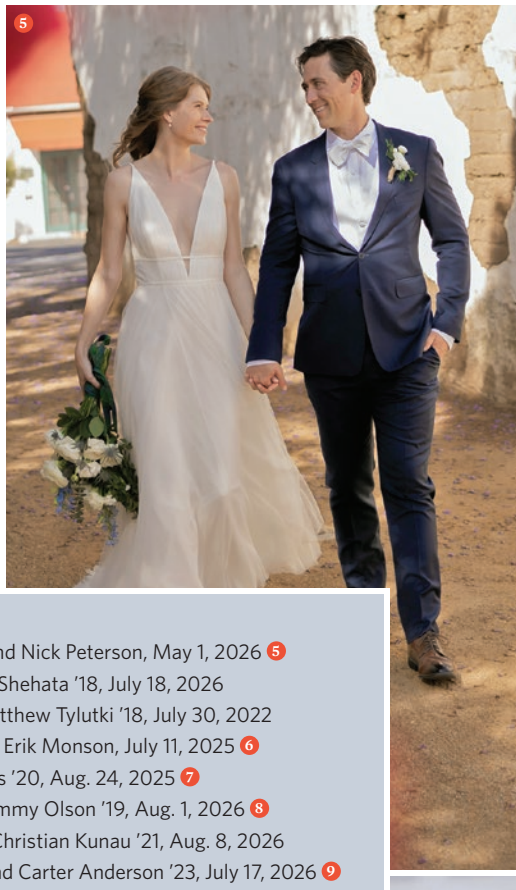










Weddings

Beth Anne Thompson '88 and Chris Bernd, Sept. 13, 2025 1
Andrew McIlroy '90 and Brian Schuh, May 9, 2026 2
Catherine Pichotta '03 and Matthew Johnson, Nov. 22, 2025
Daniel Edwins '08 and Mackenzie Koeck, Feb. 9, 2026
Ben Andreae-Quarberg '13 and John Andreae-Quarberg, July 15, 2023 3
Ariel Carlson Philippart '13 and Dylan Philippart, April 25, 2026
Mariah Meyers '14 and Michael Youderian, Aug. 30, 2024 4
Mariah Johnston Peterson '14 and Nick Peterson, May 1, 2026 5
Leigh Anne Hahn '18 and Omar Shehata '18, July 18, 2026
Rosie Linsner Tylutki '18 and Matthew Tylutki '18, July 30, 2022
Lauren Herland Monson '19 and Erik Monson, July 11, 2025 6
Julia Davila '20 and Kevin Kalkus '20, Aug. 24, 2025 7
Sarah Dehkes Olson '20 and Tommy Olson '19, Aug. 1, 2026 8
Jennika Paulson Kunau '21 and Christian Kunau '21, Aug. 8, 2026
Emma McClure Anderson '22 and Carter Anderson '23, July 17, 2026 9









Deaths

Harriet Hahn Heppner '39, Delavan, Minn., July 25, 2025
Mary Ann Molstein Hamann '45, Fountain, Minn., June 2, 2026
Ruth Boening Nachtwey '46, Portland, Ore., April 30, 2026
Natalie Myhrvold '48, Oakland, Calif., May 14, 2025
*Rolf Slen '48, Roseville, Minn., May 30, 2026
Shirlee Kostock Stone '48, Thousand Oaks, Calif., Aug. 20, 2026
Elaine Tenney Vangerud '48, Edina, Minn., March 23, 2026
Anna "Ann" Urness Gesme '49, Cedar Rapids, Iowa, May 8, 2026
Jeanette Stolee Nelson '49, Northfield, Minn., Sept. 2, 2026
Marjorie "Marge" Benedict Dunlap '50, Austin, Minn., June 1, 2026
Donna Shapira Hauge '50, Ormond Beach, Fla., May 1, 2026
Betty Berggren Cole '51, Pleasant Hill, Tenn., Dec. 8, 2025
*Walter "Wally" Lorentsen '51, Carol Stream, Ill., March 29, 2026
Betty Olson '51, Northfield, Minn., June 16, 2026
Robert "Bob" Skare '51, Waconia, Minn., Jan. 7, 2026
Ruth Sponheim '51, Sioux Falls, S.D., Aug. 4, 2026
Myrwood Bagne '52, Austin, Minn., March 18, 2026
Jacquelin "Jackie" Morem Blackford '52, Brookings, S.D., July 22, 2026
Beverly Nicolaus Henderson '52, Woodbury, Minn., Sept. 12, 2026
Allen Ogard '53, Santa Fe, N.M., March 29, 2026
*Robert "Bob" Smart '53, Freedom, N.H., May 6, 2026
Patricia "Pat" Watzke Heidner '54, Santa Barbara, Calif., June 22, 2026
Carol Johnson '54, Northfield, Minn., June 11, 2026
Darleen Solheim Johnson '54, Plymouth, Minn., Aug. 11, 2026
Norma Myrah Munson '54, Edina, Minn., May 9, 2026
Miriam Byro Rogness '54, Forest City, Iowa, March 1, 2026
Sharlene Johnson Slothower '54, Raleigh, N.C., March 30, 2026
*Dean Buntrock '55, Oakbrook Terrace, Ill., April 17, 2026
Paul Christenson '55, Red Wing, Minn., April 29, 2026
*David Halsor '55, Northfield, Minn., June 26, 2026
Robert Hill '55, San Francisco, Feb. 28, 2026
Marguerite Johnson '55, New York City, March 25, 2026
David Nasby '55, Rochester, Minn., March 20, 2026
*Lowell "Bud" Nasby '55, Jackson, Minn., Aug. 4, 2026
Marshall "Marsh" Pechauer '55, Edina, Minn., Aug. 20, 2026
Donna Henriksen Skovgaard '55, Colorado Springs, Colo., March 30, 2026
Martha Breisch Fisher '56, Quakertown, Pa., Feb. 8, 2026
Louise Moen Torgerson '56, Seattle, June 21, 2026
Duane Jones '57, St. Paul, Minn., Sept. 15, 2026
Alan Owens '57, Hammond, Wis., March 14, 2026
Arline Campbell Satrom '57, Woodbury, Minn., Sept. 13, 2026
Marlene "Molly" Liedman Schmidt '57, Litchfield, Minn., Dec. 18, 2025
*Dorothea Tenney '57, Isle, Minn., July 5, 2024
Marlin Wiemer '57, Edina, Minn., Oct. 9, 2025
Lois Carlson Willand '57, Minneapolis, May 29, 2026
Carole Johnson Bendtsen '58, Madison, Wis., March 26, 2026
*James Dicke '58, Raleigh, N.C., Dec. 21, 2025
Carol Thompson Dye '58, Billings, Mont., April 15, 2026
Darlene Wendlandt Fasching '58, Mound, Minn., April 25, 2026
Virginia Kelly '58, Wilmington, N.C., Feb. 12, 2026
*John Schmidt '58, Litchfield, Minn., April 2, 2026
Marilyn Radke Spearbraker '58, Menomonee Falls, Wis., May 2, 2026
Mary Anderson '59, Brainerd, Minn., Oct. 13, 2025
Martha Hugstad Hoven '59, Duluth, Minn., May 1, 2026
*George Norbeck '59, Woodside, Calif., July 24, 2026
Karen Anderson Ricklefs '59, Rochester, Minn., Aug. 25, 2026
Janet "Jan" Peterson Thronson '59, El Granada, Calif., Sept. 2, 2026
Craig Christensen '60, Carmel, Calif., April 28, 2026
Esther Rynning Harman '60, Woodbury, Minn., Sept. 4, 2026
*Herum Bjork '61, Mercer Island, Wash., July 19, 2026
*Roger Fletcher '61, Blue Earth, Minn., April 14, 2026
Pamela "Pam" Christopherson Frick '61, Yankton, S.D., March 7, 2026
Barbara "Barb" Johnson Hanson '61, Palatine, Ill., July 23, 2025
Brian Johnson '61, Hugo, Minn., Aug. 22, 2026
Ruth Schansberg Keck '61, Mayville, Mich., June 6, 2025
Jerald "Buck" Larson '61, Woodbury, Minn., April 30, 2026
Dorean Schindeldecker Mucha '61, Owatonna, Minn., May 16, 2026
*Paul Stenseth '61, Grand Forks, N.D., Dec. 25, 2025
Angela "Angie" St. Germaine Stephens '61, Plains, Mont., May 8, 2026
Susan Harris Vigants '61, Minneapolis, May 1, 2026
*Richard Anderson '62, Traverse City, Mich., Feb. 17, 2026
Priscilla "Pris" Johnson Dordell '62, Mesa, Ariz., Aug. 9, 2026
Stephen "Steve" Egge '62, Park Rapids, Minn., March 7, 2026
David Hamry '62, Puyallup, Wash., May 23, 2026
Lowell Kispert '62, Tuscaloosa, Ala., Feb. 8, 2026
Jon Lundin '62, Charlotte, N.C., Nov. 24, 2025
Michael Miller '62, Minneapolis, May 2, 2026
Barbara "B. J." Osnes Overlie '62, Sheldon, Iowa, Feb. 27, 2026
Karen Thom Stein '62, Hayward, Calif., June 8, 2026
Thomas "Tom" Faber '63, Beaver Dam, Wis., March 31, 2026
Carole Gimmestad Johnson '63, Newbury Park, Calif., May 5, 2026
Joanne Johnson Ulvog '63, Oriental, N.C., Aug. 31, 2026
Karen Ladderud Doty '64, Washington, D.C., June 21, 2025
Stanley "Stan" Lillich '64, Madison, Wis., April 12, 2026
Gloria Warble Singer '64, Cary, N.C., March 19, 2026
Neil Boyd '65, Forest City, Iowa Feb. 26, 2026
Marilyn Bogh Chavera '65, Madison, Wis., July 30, 2026
John Long '65, North Canton, Ohio, March 14, 2026
Carol Cauldwell McElroy '65, Peoria, Ariz., Dec., 2025
Carol Lundeen Ralston '65, Minneapolis, May 30, 2026
Frederic "Fred" Syrdal '65, Cambridge, Minn., Aug. 23, 2026
Constance "Connie" Bergh Wallin '65, Greenwood, Ind., Sept. 19, 2026
*Robert "Bob" Barsness '66, Edina, Minn., March 18, 2026
Eric Grimsrud '66, St. Paul, Minn., April 17, 2026
Carol Schultz Jacobs '66, Medford, Ore., May 16, 2026
*Raymond "Ray" Jacobsen '66, Eagan, Minn., May 1, 2026
Candace "Candy" Wiren Jones '66, Brookings, S.D., June 25, 2025
Walter Kukkonen '66, Minneapolis, Sept. 14, 2026
Judith "Judy" Huseth Nelson '66, Dadeville, Ala., April 3, 2026
Michael Olsen '66, Colorado Springs, Colo., July 24, 2026
*Arthur "Art" Skauge '66, Burnsville, Minn., May 29, 2026
Janice Trebbin '66, Santa Barbara, Calif., Jan. 21, 2026
Tanis Oksendahl Beadle '67, Park Rapids, Minn., March 21, 2026
Douglas "Doug" Blanchard '67, Winter Garden, Fla., May 27, 2026
George "Geo" Geo '67, Brookings, S.D., Feb. 11, 2026
Charles "Charlie" Huebner '67, Midvale, Utah, March 27, 2026
*Gerald "Gerry" Sand '67, Springfield, Tenn., April 17, 2026
Dennis "Denny" Rosen '67, Rockford, Mich., June 16, 2026
Lea Ann Dahlke Strand '67, Redmond, Wash., March 2, 2026
Patrick "Pat" Greenwood '68, Owatonna, Minn., Jan. 15, 2026
John Johnson '68, Cedar Falls, Iowa, Jan. 2, 2026
Cynthia "Cindie" Moe Menken '68, Deer River, Minn., May 6, 2026
*John Staby '68, Minneapolis, March 10, 2026
James "Jim" Stueland '68, San Francisco, March 22, 2026
Kenneth "Ken" Wall '68, Wilbraham, Mass., July 26, 2025
Rolf "Buzz" Behrents '69, Overland Park, Kan., April 25, 2026
David Borgendale '69, Nuremberg, Germany, March 23, 2026
James "Jim" Erdahl '69, Naples, Fla., May 19, 2026
Kristi Nordstrom Johnson '69, Champlin, Minn., March 8, 2026
Kenneth "Ken" Lawrence '68, Georgetown, Texas, July 31, 2026
Rolf Sovik '69, Honesdale, Pa., Jan. 29, 2026
Jon Lindman '70, Glade Park, Colo., April 15, 2025
Gayle Roby '70, Bedford, Mass., May 22, 2026
Joan Gustafson Strom '70, Brookfield, Ill., Feb. 19, 2026
Jane Baker Koons '71, Hopkins, Minn., Dec. 15, 2025
*Larry Kurtz '71, Stevens Point, Wis., March 28, 2026
Cynthia "Cene" Carlson Ramseyer '71, Half Moon Bay, Calif., April 3, 2026
Lyle Anderson '72, Cleveland, Tenn., Feb. 28, 2026

Paula Schweigert Berit Sethre '72, Minneapolis, Nov. 21, 2025
John Kieffer '73, Maple Grove, Minn., Oct. 11, 2025
Thomas "Tom" Smith '74, Minneapolis, June 5, 2026
Vurl Trytten '74, Yreka, Calif., June 4, 2026
Paul Mueller '75, Henrico, Va., June 25, 2026
Cindy Helleckson '76, Wanamingo, Minn., Sept. 12, 2026
Barbara "Barb" Lund '76, Apple Valley, Minn., Aug. 2, 2026
Debra Jensen '77, Pleasanton, Calif., Feb. 28, 2026
Jeffrey Kalstrom '77, Duluth, Minn., June 4, 2026
Christine Spelich '77, Delmar, N.Y., Aug. 3, 2026
Barbara Zippel '77, Phoenix, Aug. 11, 2026
Eme Akwari '78, Houston, Feb. 18, 2026
Thomas "Tom" Eastwood '79, Santa Fe, N.M., 2026
Ted Dyste '80, Edina, Minn., Aug. 27, 2026
Brent Johnson '82, St. Louis Park, Minn., May 6, 2026
Pamela "Pam" Nordaune '82, St. Paul, Minn., June 18, 2026
Patricia Wilson '82, New Orleans, Nov. 11, 2025
Linda Schlesinger '84, St. Paul, Minn., Aug. 29, 2025
Margaret "Peg" Anderson Swearingen '84, Farmington, Minn., March 13, 2026
Nancy Nye Gordon '86, Omaha, Neb., April 26, 2026
Reed Roloff '86, Bloomington, Minn., May 7, 2026
John Gigerich '87, Barrington, Ill., July 6, 2026
Marlene Fure '90, St. Paul, Minn., Dec. 16, 2025
Amanda Peterson Wycoff '96, St. Paul, Minn., July 20, 2026
David Archer '00, Brooklyn, N.Y., May 24, 2026
Cindi Roe Hautekeete '00, Centennial, Colo., Feb., 18, 2026
Katherine "Katie" Rusch '05, Boston, Feb. 26, 2026
Molly Andrews '19, North Ridgeville, Ohio, May 1, 2026

*VETERAN

Remembering Mary Ann Emery

Associate Professor Emerita of Economics Mary Ann Holliday Emery, 83, died August 1, 2026.

Born in Hibbing, Minnesota, Emery earned her bachelor's degree from Washington University in St. Louis and her master's degree from the University of Minnesota. She joined the St. Olaf faculty in 1969 alongside her husband, Professor Emeritus of Economics David Emery, and taught accounting and economics for more than 40 years before retiring in 2011.



A certified public accountant, Emery earned the third-highest score in the nation out of more than 72,000 candidates on the CPA exam in 1982. During her tenure, she helped establish the college's concentration in business, authored three accounting books, and brought numerous business leaders to campus. She also conducted financial research in Washington, D.C.

Emery was dedicated to her students, encouraging them to connect classroom lessons to real-world applications. Reflecting on her teaching philosophy, she once said, "I've developed an idea that if you're going to talk about a topic, you have to figure out how to show someone it's useful in the real world."

Beyond campus, she enjoyed classical music, served on the board of WCAL Radio, and was active with the League of Women Voters and with the Friends of Way Park in the Northfield community.

She is survived by her husband of more than 60 years, David; sons **Carl** (Lilian) **Emery '91** and Bruce (Rebecca) Emery; and grandchildren Spencer, Evan, and Rion.

Remembering Louis Henry Kermott



Professor Emeritus of Biology Louis Henry Kermott died on September 5, 2026. He was 90.

Born in Indianapolis, Indiana, and raised in Minot, North Dakota, Kermott initially planned to follow in his family's footsteps and become a fourth-generation physician. After attending the University of Chicago (transferring in the summer before 11th grade — he relished telling people that he never graduated from high school) and Macalester College, he pursued medical studies at the University of North Dakota, where he discovered his passion for animal behavior. He went on to earn a Ph.D. in ecology, evolution, and animal behavior from the University of Minnesota.

Kermott began his teaching career at Carleton College before joining the St. Olaf Biology Department, where he taught for nearly four decades. In 2006 he became the inaugural Marie M. Meyer Distinguished Professor, a title he held until his retirement in 2014.

Dedicated to teaching, mentorship, and scholarship, Kermott described his work at St. Olaf as "my ideal kind of job — the students have been very bright and fun to work with, and it's great to get to know them and see what they do."

Outside the classroom, he enjoyed nature photography, hiking, biking, camping, cross-country skiing, and spending time along Lake Superior, within Glacier National Park, and in the Nerstrand Big Woods State Park.

Kermott is survived by his wife of 35 years, **Cindy (Feyereisn) Kermott '96**; stepsons David (Whitney) Landsteiner, **Joel** (Adrienne) **Landsteiner '04**, and **Benjamin** (Rachel) **Landsteiner '07**; and seven grandchildren: Carly, Chace, Avery, Alivia, Vivian, Eleanor, and Warren.

Remembering John Walters



Professor Emeritus of Chemistry John Walters died August 18, 2026, at age 88.

Born in Elgin, Illinois, Walters graduated from Purdue University in 1960 and earned his doctorate in analytical chemistry from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign in 1964. He taught at the University of Wisconsin-Madison for 17 years before joining the St. Olaf faculty in 1982.

During his 21 years at St. Olaf, Walters developed an innovative undergraduate analytical chemistry curriculum that emphasized collaborative, small group learning. His approach, which encouraged students to rotate responsibilities during laboratory and classroom activities, garnered national attention and earned him several teaching awards. He retired in 2003.

Outside the classroom, Walters enjoyed woodworking, computers, motorcycles, and creating metal and photographic artwork. He was also an active member of St. John's Lutheran Church in Northfield.

Walters is survived by his wife of 65 years, Barbara (Auble) Walters; sons John Anthony (Annette) and Thomas Philip (Krista); grandchildren Justin (Patricia) Priest, Ashley (Matt) Kruempel, and Alexander, Michael, and Marlee Walters; and eight great-grandchildren.

How Oles Got the State Gemstone on the Minnesota License Plate

By Kat Dodge

THE IDEA STARTED IN THE SIMPLEST of spaces: just a father and his kids exchanging ideas in the car about the variety of new license plates on Minnesota's roads. A rock enthusiast, Lars Leafblad '99 asked his kids, "What if the Lake Superior agate was on a license plate?"

Inspired, Leafblad reached out to his local Minnesota House Representative to discuss the process for selecting Minnesota's license plate designs. His district representative just happened to be an Ole: Rep. David Gottfried '15, DFL-District 40B, who met with Leafblad and was impressed by the idea.

"This specialty license plate supports our Minnesota parks and trails and gives owners unlimited access to Minnesota State Parks all year round," Gottfried explains. "With so many of these stones existing in our state parks, I thought it highly appropriate that the agate be put on a license plate that supports those parks."

Unlike agates themselves, which take millions of years to form, a bill quickly came together directing the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources to create a license plate design that would "celebrate the North Shore and the Lake Superior agate." The measure drew bipartisan support.

> "This is the type of legislation that can gain bipartisan support, even in times of polarization."
>
> — STATE SENATOR JOHN MARTY '78

"There was a strong push for a better design for the state parks and trails license plate, and Leafblad made a strong case for why the North Shore and Lake Superior agates would be an iconic choice to represent our parks and trails," says Minnesota State Senator John Marty '78, DFL-District 40 — another Ole at the capitol. "This is the type of legislation that can gain bipartisan support, even in times of polarization, and I was pleased to add my support for the effort."

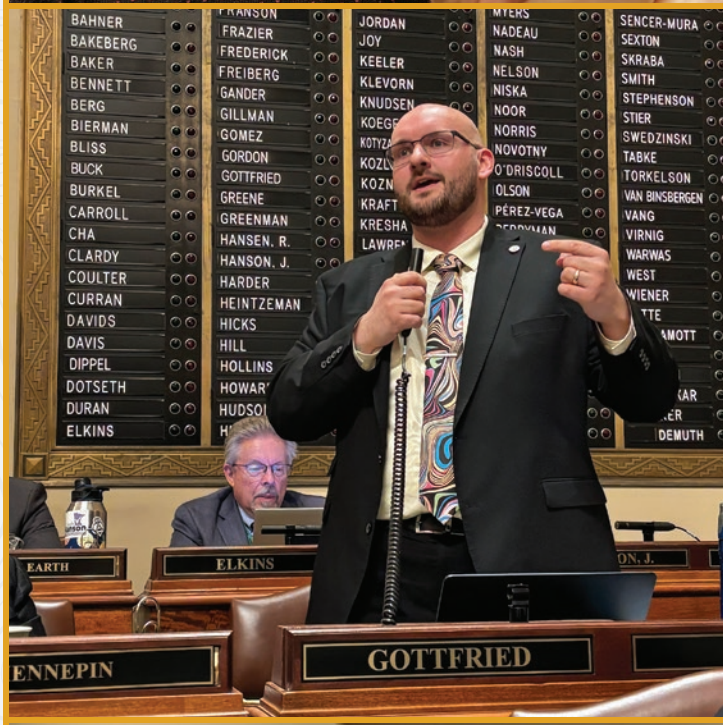
Leafblad spoke with a bipartisan group of representatives across the state and testified before the State Legislature. To do so, he collaborated with another Ole, Chris Tiedeman '98, a seasoned public affairs professional who has been engaged in state and national campaigns.

"He had conversations with anyone and everyone without caring about their political label," Tiedeman says. "It is helpful that rocks and minerals, much like agriculture and hockey, are a part of Minnesota's past, present, and future."

Governor Tim Walz signed the bill into law on April 29. The conversations and collaboration that moved the Lake Superior agate license plate from an idea to legislation to physical plate offer a real-life example of the civic process — and Oles — at work. And Minnesotans will soon be able to see the results of that effort on the road.

Learn more at AgatePlate.com.

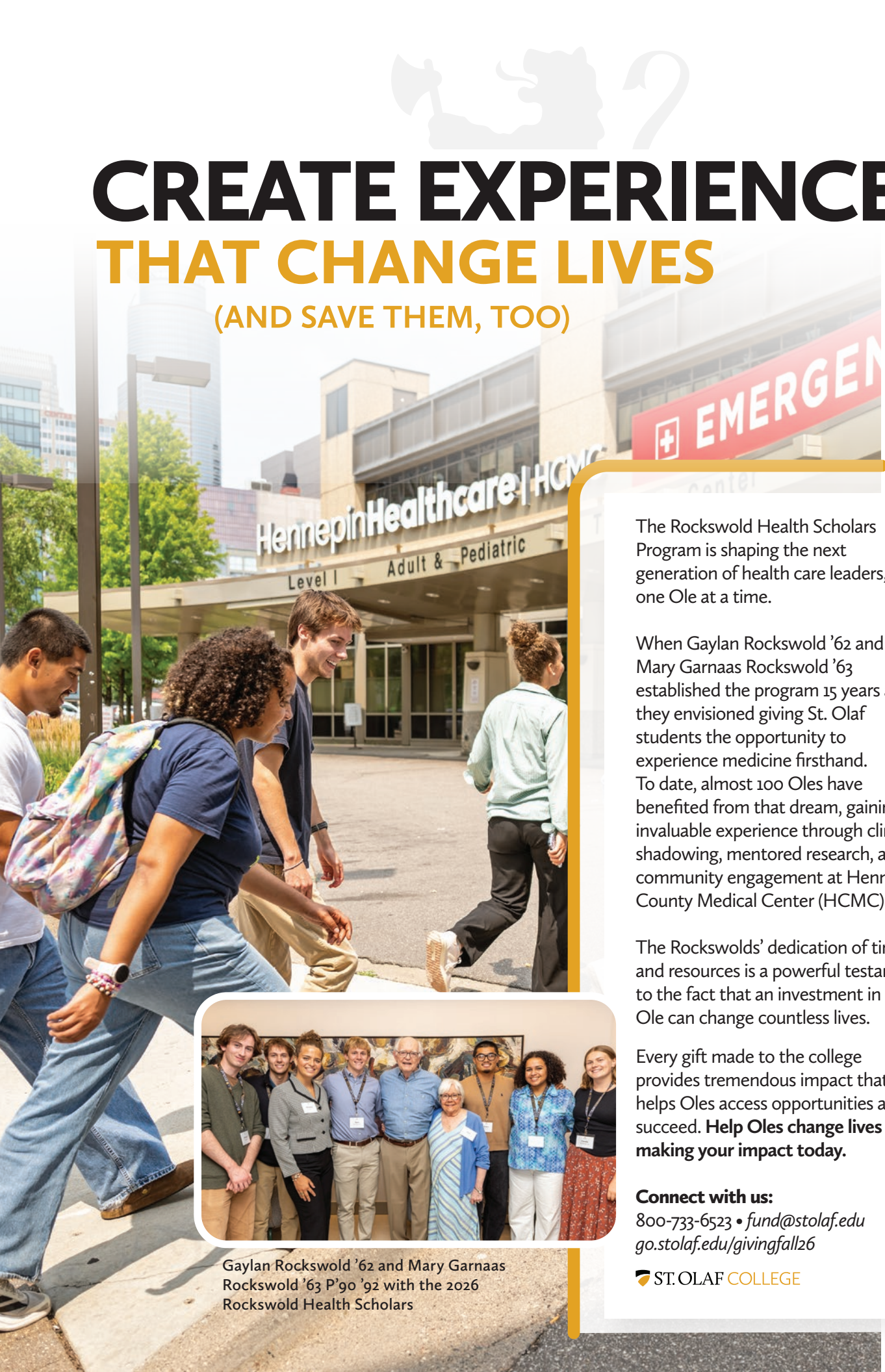






Above, from top: Lars Leafblad '99 holds a Lake Superior agate; Rep. David Gottfried '15 speaks on the House floor in support of the new license plate design; Leafblad with Senator John Marty '78.

CREATE EXPERIENCES
THAT CHANGE LIVES
(AND SAVE THEM, TOO)



Gaylan Rockswold ’62 and Mary Garnaas Rockswold ’63 P’90 ’92 with the 2026 Rockswold Health Scholars

The Rockswold Health Scholars Program is shaping the next generation of health care leaders, one Ole at a time.

When Gaylan Rockswold ’62 and Mary Garnaas Rockswold ’63 established the program 15 years ago, they envisioned giving St. Olaf students the opportunity to experience medicine firsthand. To date, almost 100 Oles have benefited from that dream, gaining invaluable experience through clinical shadowing, mentored research, and community engagement at Hennepin County Medical Center (HCMC).

The Rockswolds’ dedication of time and resources is a powerful testament to the fact that an investment in one Ole can change countless lives.

Every gift made to the college provides tremendous impact that helps Oles access opportunities and succeed. **Help Oles change lives by making your impact today.**

Connect with us:
800-733-6523 • *fund@stolaf.edu*
go.stolaf.edu/givingfall26

ST. OLAF COLLEGE

MAKE A GIFT

ST. OLAF COLLEGE
1520 St. Olaf Avenue
Northfield, MN 55057
stolaf.edu

NONPROFIT
ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
TWIN CITIES, MN
PERMIT NO. 27370

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

PARTING SHOT



MAKING S'MORE FRIENDS | Students roast marshmallows and enjoy classic fireside treats during Move-In Weekend. The 844 first-year students and 29 transfer students who arrived on the Hill this fall hail from 44 states and 45 countries. They spent their first days on campus participating in a wide range of new student orientation activities that blended fun and information. PHOTO BY EVAN PAK '19