

Lives of Worth and Service

By Claire Carlson '12

DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARD

This award is given to alumni who extend their outstanding professional skills to the greater community and bring value and advancement to their professions, communities, churches or other religious organizations, and St. Olaf College.

John F. Haugen '86

**Vice President of Health and Wellness
General Mills, Minneapolis, Minnesota**

In his twenty-one years at General Mills, John Haugen has worked tirelessly to promote healthy living.

Haugen was at the head of the movement to create whole grain cereals, and he helped implement innovative nutrition programs such as Curves Foods and the Best Life Diet. In addition to encouraging healthy choices, Haugen is also an advocate for hunger relief programs. In 2009 he launched the Pound for Pound Challenge in collaboration with the Feeding America hunger-relief charity and NBC's TV program *The Biggest Loser*. Combining entertainment with charity, not only has Haugen inspired Americans to get healthy and to donate to those in need of food, but over the past three years General Mills has delivered more than 12 million pounds of food through the Pound for Pound Challenge.



Haugen's passion for healthy living also permeates his personal life. He enjoys being fit and active and relishes the challenge of grueling endurance competitions of all sorts.

According to Haugen, his healthy habits and lifestyle are products of the disciplined St. Olaf environment. While on the Hill, he majored in mathematics and economics and describes his education as "broad-based, holistic, and highly experiential." He believes that St. Olaf cultivates students to be self-motivated to do great things and do so with a higher purpose than solely achieving monetary success.

Even with his family, work, and hobbies, Haugen makes time to be an exemplary member of the St. Olaf community. Haugen has served on the St. Olaf Alumni Board and has encouraged and supported other alumni in doing the same. He has connected hundreds of Oles with General Mills by hosting presidential lunches and the annual General Mills/St. Olaf Case Study Competition. These efforts give Oles an occasion to reunite and reengage with the college, as well as provide job opportunities for many St. Olaf graduates.

Haugen encourages current St. Olaf students to build relationships with alumni, emphasizing the value of the networks that they form. Haugen considers his own leveraging of various networks one of the keys to his success, and he regularly responds to the queries that he now receives from students.

"I haven't met many alums that are unwilling to give a fellow Ole fifteen to twenty minutes of their time," he says. "People are generally open to sharing their time and resources to help students."

GRADUATE OF THE LAST DECADE AWARD (GOLD)

This award is given to recent graduates who have set themselves apart in professional accomplishments, community service contributions, and St. Olaf involvement. Alison Smith is the first to receive this award.

Alison L. Smith '03

**Medical Student
Mercer University School of Medicine, Savannah, Georgia**

Alison Smith has a master's degree in public health, is the president of her class in medical school, and has already received several prestigious awards for her service and accomplishments. And it all started at St. Olaf.

During her time on the Hill, Smith majored in biology with concentrations in women's studies and biomedical studies. She traveled to Ecuador for an Interim and also spent a semester in Tanzania conducting field research on the prevalence of intestinal parasitic infections among Maasai children. Smith says that her travels were one of the most influential aspects of her time at St. Olaf and that her desire to continue traveling and working in the health arena led her to pursue a master's degree in international health from the Emory University Rollins School of Public Health.

Smith went on to work for the Global AIDS Program at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta. Working in more than fifteen countries, she obtained estimates of the number of people affected by HIV globally, conducted epidemiological trainings, and worked with African refugees.



While Smith enjoyed her work in public health, she knew she wanted to be a doctor. "I love public health," says Smith, "but I also wanted to gain the skills to directly heal people." At the age of twenty-seven, Smith felt the time to pursue a medical degree was "now or never," and she enrolled in the Mercer University School of Medicine two years later. Now entering her second year, Smith is thinking about specializing in emergency care, pediatrics, or obstetrics.

After years of traveling to developing parts of the world, Smith says that volunteering locally opened her eyes to how many needs there are in the United States. She mentored a teenager with HIV for four years, has taken in numerous foster animals from the humane society, and currently volunteers at a hospital as a responder for rape victims. Smith has earned multiple honors for her community service work including the Ann Bancroft Award, the U.S. Gold Congressional Award, and the Outstanding Young American Award from the Boy Scouts of America.

Smith is also an active member of the St. Olaf alumni network, counseling Oles who are interested in public health and medicine. As a recent graduate, she is in a particularly favorable position to give advice to current students. "Be aware of the needs of the world and use the opportunity of a great education at St. Olaf to help meet these needs," she says.

The strength of St. Olaf College is once again reaffirmed in the outstanding accomplishments of its 2011 alumni award recipients. During the Founders Day celebration on Friday, November 4, nine alumni will receive recognition for their personal achievements and professional contributions that embody the values of a St. Olaf education.

ALUMNI ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

This award is given to alumni who have excelled in their profession by contributing extraordinary advancements to their field or improving the quality of life in a certain area of society through their professional achievements.

David Stephen Boe '58

Organ Professor and Dean (retired)

Oberlin Conservatory of Music, Oberlin, Ohio

David Boe began playing the organ as soon as his legs grew long enough to reach the pedals. Since then, his organ performances have been heard in concert and on the radio throughout Europe and the United States. In addition to an impressive list of performances, Boe shared his passion with countless students as a professor and dean at Oberlin College.

Boe graduated magna cum laude from St. Olaf in 1958 with a B.A. in music. In addition to an affinity for music, he was attracted to classes outside his major, particularly those in philosophy and German.



After earning a master's degree in music from Syracuse University in 1960, he traveled to Germany on a Fulbright Fellowship. Over the course of his career, he studied with renowned musicians such as Raymond Boese, Helmut Walcha, Gustav Leonhardt, and Arthur Poister.

After many years of learning and studying for his own improvement, Boe devoted his life to teaching the art of organ performance to others. "Most performers that I know also teach and derive great satisfaction and personal growth from passing their art along to the next generation of musicians," he says. Boe, who joined the Oberlin College faculty in 1962, spent much of his teaching career at Oberlin, gaining great satisfaction from seeing his students develop into happy and productive professionals.

Boe was appointed the associate dean at Oberlin in 1974 and became dean of the school's Conservatory of Music in 1976, a position he held until the mid-1990s. Under his leadership and vision, the conservatory developed into one of the finest in the country. In March of this year, Oberlin Conservatory announced its first endowed professorship named after a current or emeritus professor, the David Boe Chair in Organ Studies. According to David Stull, the current dean of the Oberlin Conservatory of Music, "David Boe's artistry and teaching are legendary in the world of music, and his students hold important positions around the globe."

Boe not only played and taught the organ, but occasionally helped build them as well. In his role as organ building consultant and advisor, he advanced the revival of the tracker organ in the United States. As director of music and organist at First Lutheran Church in Lorain, Ohio, a position he held for forty years, Boe commissioned and supervised the installation of a landmark organ constructed by master builder John Brombaugh in 1970. This organ led the way for a complete change in the direction of organ building, which is still seen in prominent organ-building firms today.

ALUMNI ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Virginia K. Olsen Molgaard '61

Emerita Associate Professor

Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa

Virginia Molgaard majored in music education with an emphasis in organ performance and planned for a career in music. Although she taught music and served as an organist in several large congregations, her professional life dramatically changed direction when her brother and sister-in-law were killed by a drunk driver in 1973. Molgaard and her husband, Lee, raised her brother's four orphaned children along with their two daughters. The challenging experience of raising four grieving

children required help from psychiatrists, social workers, and therapists.

As a result of these experiences, Molgaard says she "felt called to get more education in order to help others experiencing family tragedy and crisis." She returned to school in 1979, earning her master's and Ph.D. in family therapy and family studies at Iowa State University. Her years at St. Olaf, she says, reinforced her desire to be of service to others, and the graduate degrees enabled her to pursue her new vocation.

After joining the Iowa State University faculty in 1985, Mol-



gaard began working at ISU's Institute for Social and Behavior Research and currently works on substance abuse prevention at both the national and international level. Her alcohol and drug prevention curriculum, titled "The Strengthening Families Program: For Parents and Youth 10-14 (SFP 10-14)," has been scientifically tested and found to dramatically reduce adolescent substance misuse by increasing parenting skills, building life skills in youth, and strengthening family bonds. The program is used in forty-five of the fifty states as well as in Sweden, Norway, England, Wales, Ireland, Germany, Spain, Poland, Greece, Russia, and Central and South America. Currently Molgaard and her husband are under contract with the United Nations to extend the program to Eastern Europe.

The SFP 10-14 program that Molgaard created has been deemed exemplary by the National Institute on Drug Abuse, the U.S. Department of Education, the U.S. Department of Justice, and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. In 2000 the World Health Organization commissioned a study of 6,000 programs designed to reduce adolescent substance abuse, and after rigorous review, WHO named SFP 10-14 the top program. Molgaard has also received an honorary doctorate from Oxford Brookes University (Oxford, England) and the 2010 Alumni Merit Award from Iowa State University. ▶

ALUMNI ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Ian C. Kelly '77

Senior Foreign Service Officer (with rank of Ambassador)
U.S. Department of State, Bethesda, Maryland

Each day, Ian Kelly dedicates his time, effort, and expertise to building productive relationships between the United States and other countries. He strives to create a more peaceful and dynamic world and is an advocate for the global perspective that is a pillar of the St. Olaf College mission.

“Learning the history, language, and culture of a country is just as important as studying political science.”

Fewer than 3 percent of U.S. senior foreign service officers reach the position of ambassador. Kelly has held many positions within the U.S. government — posts that have sent him to Turkey, Italy, Austria, Serbia, Belgium, all fifteen countries of the former Soviet Union, and countless other nations. As Spokesman of the State Department in 2009-10, he accompanied Secretary Hillary Clinton on all her overseas trips, including an around-the-world trip that made stops in Ireland, India, Thailand, Japan, and Alaska. Most recently, President Barack Obama appointed Kelly to serve as U.S. Ambassador to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe located in Vienna.

To prepare for a future career in diplomacy, Kelly suggests that current students learn a language and study abroad. “Learning the history, language, and culture of a country is just as important as studying political science,” he says.

Kelly earned a B.A. in Russian language, literature, and history from the St. Olaf Paracollege in 1977. By choosing the Paracollege, he was able to pursue his passions in an inventive way. As he traversed this uncharted path, Kelly says that he drew heavily from the expertise of Robert Nichols, professor emeritus of history, and James Walker, associate professor emeritus of Russian. Kelly went on



to earn a master's degree in Russian languages and literature from Northwestern University. In 1986 he earned a doctorate in Slavic languages and literature from Columbia University, where he also taught Russian. In addition to Russian, Kelly has also studied Italian, Serbo-Croatian, and Turkish at the National Foreign Affairs Training Center of the U.S. State Department.

As reflected in the variety in his overseas postings, Kelly believes in the value and variety of a liberal arts education. “Don’t specialize too much as an undergraduate,” he says. “Use these years to take an interdisciplinary approach and explore intellectual possibilities.”

ALUMNI ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Mark A. Peterson '66

President/Chief Executive Officer
Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota, St. Paul, Minnesota

“St. Olaf has had everything to do with the last twenty-five years of my career,” says Mark Peterson, who credits his time on the Hill with establishing the core values that have powered his work in social services.

Peterson graduated from St. Olaf in 1966 with majors in English and philosophy. “These majors thrived on critical thinking,” he says. “They encouraged us to be discriminate.” Peterson went on to earn a Master of Divinity from the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg and a master’s degree in social work from the University of Pennsylvania.

Over the course of his career, Peterson has held various positions within the realm of social service, beginning with a position at the Office of Civil Rights within the U.S. Department of Health Education and Welfare. Peterson later became involved with Lutheran Social Services (LSS). He started as a program director in Illinois and then moved to Michigan, where he was an LSS vice president. In 1987 Peterson achieved



the position of CEO for LSS in Minnesota, one that he has held ever since.

Peterson has pioneered countless projects and initiatives in his role at LSS. One was aimed at expanding disaster response services throughout the United States, another at creating a statewide system of accessible case management and counsel-

ing services for veterans. Under his tenure, the Center for Changing Lives opened in Minneapolis, a venture that provides forty-eight units of affordable family housing and is home to a wide range of LSS services, including mental health support, adoption, housing services, refugee services, financial counseling, and employment services. In addition to providing all of these services, the building was constructed in an environmentally friendly manner and was awarded a LEED certification.

At LSS, Peterson envisions a world in which all people have the opportunity to live and work with dignity, safety, and hope. This vision powers the LSS mission: to express the love of Christ for all people through service that inspires hope, changes lives, and builds community. LSS is Minnesota’s oldest and largest human service organization, serving more than 100,000 people in Minnesota today. Despite the progress that has been made, Peterson knows that this type of work is far from finished. “After 146 years, we feel we’ve only just begun,” he says.

In addition to his work at LSS, Peterson is dedicated to his community and the Lutheran church. He has been involved in many faith-based and government committees, boards, and task forces focusing on human service delivery issues.

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD

This award is given to alumni whose time, talents, or resources have advanced the college's programs. DSA recipients have distinguished themselves in a lifelong pursuit of service and exemplify the ideals and spirit of St. Olaf and the college's mission.

Paul V. Martinson '57

**Founder and Vice President
China Service Ventures, Bemidji, Minnesota**

Paul Martinson was born in China to second-generation Lutheran missionaries and grew up with a love for the country and its people. After moving back and forth between the United States and China throughout his childhood, Martinson settled down at St. Olaf College.

"Unlike a large university, St. Olaf provided an opportunity both for an awareness of the community as a whole and for participation in a variety of ways," says Martinson. "As an active member of groups like the Mission Society, I enjoyed the friendship of others as we learned about the world and its needs and complexities."

Despite being separated by half a world, the connection between St. Olaf and China is longstanding. As Martinson notes, several St. Olaf faculty members taught in China, including Agnes Kittlesby, a 1900 St. Olaf graduate, who was principal of the American School of Kikungshan in 1915, a school for missionary children and youth. During his own time at St. Olaf,

Martinson found that his background was not unique. "It seemed that no other Lutheran college enjoyed so many missionary children from China," he says.

In 1979 Martinson traveled to China for the first time since childhood, and since then he has returned

yearly. His trips have had various objectives but have always resulted in building new relationships. Martinson also developed friendships with the many Chinese visiting scholars and students he has hosted at his home in the United States.

Wanting to make these students' transition to American life and culture as smooth and comfortable as possible, Martinson aided in the development of the Hospitality Center for Chinese in 1991 and served on its board of directors to ensure that the ministry grew in both size and impact.

Martinson has taught at Luther Seminary in St. Paul and has preached all over the United States and China. He has also written several books about mission work and global perspective. Even in retirement, Martinson's dedication and service to the Chinese people hasn't waned. In 2001 Martinson and several others founded China Service Ventures (CSV), an independent Lutheran organization that makes education possible for impoverished children in the Henan Province of China.

After years of organizing and developing CSV, the Chinese government recognized the organization in January 2010. As part of this recognition, Martinson was invited to Beijing's Great Hall of the People to address the International Conference on the Development of Jigongshan.



DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD

Paul H. Christenson '55

Retired Pastor (AELC)/Organist and Choral Director/Bed & Breakfast and Ice Cream Shop Owner; Red Wing, Minnesota

Lois Wold Christenson '55

Parish Worker/Church Musician/Bed & Breakfast and Ice Cream Shop Owner; Red Wing, Minnesota

Paul and Lois Christenson have dedicated endless amounts of time, effort, and resources to the betterment of their local and global communities. The scope of their efforts has been felt as far away as Bosnia and as close as their own community of Red Wing, Minnesota.

"Globally, I think the projects that bring together diverse cultures and experiences are the most rewarding," says Lois.

The Christensons have welcomed refugees and foreign exchange students into their home, as well as traveled with peace-promoting programs abroad. Locally, they participated in the Ulster Project in their



congregations in Decorah, Iowa, and Evanston, Illinois, bringing Catholic and Protestant high school youth from Northern Ireland to the United States in an attempt to promote peace through friendship and intercultural dialog with youth from both nations.

As part of an ongoing biennial peace conference, "Build Bridges, Not Walls," the Christensons have brought international students to Red Wing to attend the conference.

With the mission of encouraging peace abroad, the Christensons have chaperoned students to International Youth Peace Conferences in Norway and Bosnia and have also traveled around the world with their six children (Steven, Ruth, Joel, Nathan, Rachel, and Thomas) as "The Christenson Family Singers," bringing songs of faith and family to audiences in the United States and Europe, and creating for the whole family a new understanding of others outside their own culture.

While their life journeys have taken them far and wide, they credit St. Olaf for much of their motivation to serve. "The messages underlying our course of study and singing in the St. Olaf Choir have always carried the altruistic purpose of life," says Paul, "that is, to reach out to others with the energy, compassion, and knowledge we received through the lectures, discussions, and programming on campus. That is foremost in both faith and life."

Lois, who majored in religion and Christian education, believes that the college's church affiliations provide a strong foundation for service. "My life's experiences have taught me that the world is a better place when people follow the command of our faith," she says.

The Christensons have also served the St. Olaf community, volunteering their time to class reunions and the St. Olaf Alumni Board and their musical talents to the Alumni Journeys Program. 🐾

CLAIRE CARLSON '12 is majoring in English with a concentration in media studies.

For more information about St. Olaf alumni achievement awards and nomination forms, visit stolaf.edu/alumni/awards or call 888-865-6537.