THE FOUNDERS MEDAL

In 1874 Norwegian immigrant families — including pastors, farmers, and business leaders — founded St. Olaf College to provide their young adults with the skills, community, and opportunities required to thrive in their new country and advance the common good. The Founders Medal, one of the highest honors the college can bestow, recognizes individuals whose extraordinary contributions have significantly advanced St. Olaf's mission and improved the lives and outcomes of its students, both today and for generations to come.

The medal is awarded periodically at Founders Day. The president of St. Olaf College selects recipients based on their exceptional engagement and generosity, which may include:

- Outstanding skills and leadership given in service to the St. Olaf community.
- Long-term, meritorious volunteer service as a St. Olaf Regent or through other meaningful engagement with the college.
- Major financial gifts that have transformed access, belonging, campus life, financial aid, learning, or other core elements of a St. Olaf education.

The Founders Medal recognizes recipients as modern founders of the college. It serves as a public declaration of deep gratitude from the entire St. Olaf community and highlights the transformative power of philanthropy in supporting higher education.

Today, the Founders Medal is awarded to O. Jay Tomson '58 and Patricia A. Tomson '59.



FOUNDERS DAY

BOE MEMORIAL CHAPEL
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 2026
11 A.M.

THE PROGRAM

Invocation	Sarah Semmler Smith ’04, Associate College Chaplain
Anthem	ELW #632 *O God, Our Help in Ages Past* Catherine Rodland ’87, Artist in Residence - Organist
Reading	Colossians 3:12-17
Welcome and Introduction	Susan Rundell Singer, St. Olaf College President
Presentation of Founders Medal	Susan Rundell Singer, St. Olaf College President Stephanie Fehr ’87, St. Olaf College Board of Regents Chair Honorees: O. Jay Tomson ’58 and Patricia A. Tomson ’59
Hymn	ELW #733 *Great Is Thy Faithfulness* Catherine Rodland ’87, Artist in Residence - Organist Leif Olsen ’27 - Piano
Benediction	Matthew Marohl, College Chaplain and College Pastor
Postlude	*Toccata (from Symphony No. 5, Op. 42, No. 1)* Charles-Marie Wido Catherine Rodland ’87, Artist in Residence - Organist

O. JAY ’58 & PATRICIA A. TOMSON ’59

FOUNDERS MEDAL RECIPIENTS



Senior Regent O. Jay Tomson ’58 and Patricia A. Tomson ’59 first met at St. Olaf College. Their shared appreciation for Norwegian culture and values sparked a lifelong partnership, and they married in Hilleboe Chapel in 1958. O. Jay graduated in 1958, while Pat completed her sociology degree in 1959, both deeply committed to family, faith, service, and community.

After graduation, O. Jay built a distinguished career in finance, first working for the U.S. Treasury and Federal Reserve before acquiring First Citizens Financial Corporation and serving as its chairman and CEO. He later served as president of the Iowa Independent Bankers Association and the Independent Community Bankers of America. Pat pursued her passion for helping others by earning a master’s degree in counseling and devoting her career to advocating for vulnerable children and families as a family therapist and nonprofit leader.

Grounded in gratitude, O. Jay and Pat have transformed communities through their extraordinary generosity. At St. Olaf, O. Jay served on the Board of Regents, including as chair. His visionary leadership guided the college through major campus improvements, a presidential search, and key academic initiatives. Together, the Tomsons have contributed more than $8.9 million to St. Olaf, endowing the Tomson Family Professorship in Law and Economics, funding the revitalization of Tomson Hall, supporting Christmas Festival streaming, and advancing other initiatives. Beyond the Hill, their generous impact extends across healthcare, education, youth programs, and numerous nonprofit organizations.

In 2006, O. Jay received the Medal of St. Olav from the late King Harald V of Norway. In recognition of their leadership and service, St. Olaf College proudly honors O. Jay and Pat Tomson today with the Founders Medal.