



# Oak Leaves

Newsletter of the ELS Historical Society

Volume 15

February 2012

Issue 4

## In memory of Norman S. Holte 1918 ~ 2011

**Comments from the funeral of Norman Holte by  
Bethany Lutheran College President Dan Bruss  
on November 14, 2011 at  
Mt. Olive Lutheran Church, Mankato, MN**

Each of us as Christians look forward to the day when we hear our Lord say to us, as the master in Jesus' parable of the servants and their talents said, "Well done, good and faithful servant." But I think for Norman, this was said in a very loud voice on Thursday as he joined the faithful who had gone before him!

When I or any of those who knew and worked with him over the years at Bethany think of Norman, it is his faithful servant attitude that jumps out immediately. As Lutherans we often talk about our Christian vocation. I believe that for Norman, his vocation was Bethany. For you, as his family, Bethany was an extension of your family and the campus was an extension of your backyard. Working at Bethany wasn't just a job, it was his life.

I asked a few of those who had worked with him over the years what they remembered. One said, "He was always very thoughtful. He enriched many conversations on campus." Another commented that he provided a consistent, steady hand to whatever he did at Bethany. I saw it first-hand when I was on campus. While I didn't have him for class, I did use the Registrar's office. A few years later he and I were faculty members to-

gether, until he became my boss as President. In each case his calm, gentle and humble attitude was evident. As an aside, I left just before he returned to serve again on the faculty. I went on to graduate school miles away in Bozeman, MT. Little did I, or he, know that we would also share a Bozeman connection.

As President I get to see first-hand how each piece of the campus fits together to make it work. Norman not only had that vantage point, but he actually lived quite a variety of those pieces, whether as a faculty member, Dean or President. Wherever the College needed him, he was willing to faithfully serve. He was committed to help provide the "One Thing Needful" to our students throughout the years. As a result he impacted

many who studied and worked at Bethany.



For you, Violet, your children and extended family, he will be greatly missed. But you have the assurance as children of God, that you will be reunited with him as well as the rest of the

"host arrayed in white" that stands before God's throne. Well done, good and faithful servant. ■

**From former Bethany Lutheran College President  
Marvin Meyer:**

I worked with President Holte for thirty-five years and during that time it was very apparent he truly was a willing servant of Bethany Lutheran College and his church. He was willing to take on whatever was asked of him and do it well. As far as I am aware, he always was satisfied with the task before him—never striving to climb the so-called institutional ladder.

In 1978 when he reluctantly assumed the office of president of BLC he knew that it would not be easy. Bethany was going through a very difficult financial time. This little college had a large operational deficit that had accumulated over a number of years. I'm sure many individuals that were aware of the problem thought Bethany would not survive. But with the Lord's help and President Holte's steady focus and spending controls the college survived the challenge and became a much stronger institution.

In every institution—college, church, corporation, etc.—there are the so-called political issues and there are those individuals that love to get involved. And in some cases the politics can be pretty tough. But Norman never got himself involved in those kind of issues.

President Holte was a remarkable man who played an integral part in developing and strengthening Bethany Lutheran College. His encouragement and humble being will be missed. ■

**Former Bethany Lutheran College Development  
Officer Peter T. Harstad recalls a meeting he and  
Norman Holte attended:**

Norman Holte was a multi-faceted man. His pleasant face and ever-ready smile were apparent to all, but few recognize the full range of his talents.

For three years during the early 1980s, I served as Bethany's Development Officer. President Holte and Development Director Ernest Geistfield charged me with extending Bethany's constituency to the Mankato community and beyond. To make contacts, Norman urged me to join a service club. Because of Rotary International's history of supporting college scholarships, I decided to join the Mankato Rotary Club.

What follows focuses on Norman's role during one pivotal hour, namely 1:45 to 2:45 May 26, 1982. True, prior to this date Bethany had received gifts from beyond its alumni and friends. And since then, the scale of such giving has greatly increased. Yet, Norman's role in expanding Bethany's horizons is noteworthy because it came at a crucial time in the institution's development.

An enthusiastic Rotarian, Paul L. Stevens, President of the Mankato Citizens Telephone Company, also presided over the Company's fund-granting Foundation. Through him, a presentation before the Foundation's Board of Directors was easily scheduled. Norman perceived a potential "fit" and decided to request funds to endow a scholarship program at Bethany.

When we entered the Board Room that spring day, Paul introduced President Holte and seated him at the head of the table. Norman opened with a compelling account of Bethany's role in the Mankato community and followed with a request for dollars to support the Dr. S. C. Ylvisaker Memorial Fund. With the blessing of the Ylvisaker family, he explained, its purpose was to provide "scholarships to young women and men who show evidence of high academic and Christian leadership potential." Norman spoke convincingly, fielded questions, and bantered with board members. Several of them related anecdotes about President Ylvisaker and members of his family.

As we bid our farewells, Norman beamed his infectious smile. The very next day, Paul responded on behalf of the Foundation with a \$1,000 check for expenses, a pledge of \$5,000 as an initial gift to the endowment fund, and a promise to match on a dollar-for-dollar basis the next \$5,000 over our \$100,000 goal. This exceeded our most optimistic expectations. At least as important as the dollars, was the credibility that the Foundation bestowed upon Bethany and the Memorial Fund. Through the efforts of donors, large and small, Bethany exceeded the goal of \$200,000 in time to observe the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Dr. Ylvisaker's birth June 15, 1984. Thereafter, the fund continued to increase. As of January 1, 2012, 118 students have received S. C. Ylvisaker tuition scholarships. ■

## Bethany's Old Main Cornerstone

by Becky DeGarmeaux



Prof. Erling Teigen, Shelley Harrison of the Blue Earth County Historical Society, and President Dan Bruss carefully remove documents from the cornerstone.

September 6, 1911 was the opening day of Bethany Ladies College. One year earlier, in October of 1910 the cornerstone for its Old Main was set in place. Historically, a cornerstone was set at the base of a building to be a reference mark for lining up the rest of the building. Over time, the cornerstone took on a more symbolic purpose — as a repository of documents which tell something about the building and its purpose. Keeping these things in mind, many members of the Bethany family met on August 9, 2011, at the southwest corner of Old Main to watch the contents of its cornerstone be removed for examination. Prof. Erling Teigen and Shelley Harrison of the Blue Earth County Historical Society carefully moved the many documents from the cornerstone to a box and took the contents to the building's lobby to examine and display them.



Going through the articles (a list follows), two things became clear: the documents were in an amazing state of preservation and the founders of Bethany Ladies' College held their Lutheran faith in high importance.

Many of the documents were in German since that was still the language used in the founding churches' worship services. They included hymnbooks, catechisms, and synodical documents from the Wisconsin and Missouri Synods. Also included were German and English language newspapers of the day.

For several weeks many of the artifacts were displayed in the College's Memorial Library so that students and guests would have a chance to view them.

Then, on October 3<sup>rd</sup>, after a special chapel service, the time came to put new artifacts into the cornerstone so that it could be closed again. A quick review of the contents (also below) shows that although many things have changed in the past 100 years, many have stayed the same at Bethany.

What was once “Bethany Ladies’ College”: a “finishing” school for young women, is now “Bethany Lutheran College”: a four year baccalaureate-granting institution. A school which was originally founded by an association of German-Lutheran congregations is now owned by a Synod originally formed by Norwegian-Lutherans. A one-building school is now a 10+ building campus that continues to grow.

But one thing has not changed, the true foundation of the school, the “One Thing Needful”, “Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone.” (Eph. 2:20b). This is evident in both what the original founders placed in the cornerstone and also with what the heirs of that legacy chose to replace those articles.

Original documents:

*Hymnbook* of the Wisconsin Synod  
*Hymnbook* of the Missouri Synod  
*Catechism* of the Missouri Synod  
*Catechism* of the Wisconsin Synod  
*Calendar* of the Missouri Synod of 1910  
*Synod Report* of the Minnesota Synod 1907  
*Synod Report* of the Joint Synod of Wisconsin, Minn., Mich., and other states, 1909  
*Synod Report* of the Missouri Synod from 1910  
*Synod Report* of the Minnesota Synod from 1906  
*Calendar* of the Minnesota Synod 1891  
*The Lutheran* of 28 June 1910 [forerunner of the *Lutheran Witness*]  
*Congregation Magazine* from 15 October 1910  
*Children's Friend* - September and October 1910  
Commemorative booklet of the local congregation [Immanuel]  
*Catalogue* of Dr. Martin Luther College  
Some issues of the *Hospital Friend*  
Some issues of the *Trinity Congregation Newspaper*  
Some issues of *Rundschau* [Review]  
An issue of *Germania* [German newspaper]  
Some issues of *Daily Free Press* [Mankato newspaper]  
Some issues of *Daily Review* [Mankato newspaper]  
Some issues of *Mankato Post* [German newspaper]  
Some issues of *St. Paul Volkszeitung* [German newspaper]  
A bond for the present institution  
An issue of *Lessons for Lutheran Sunday Schools*  
An issue of *Crumbs*  
Catalog of Lutheran Ladies Seminary of Red Wing  
A picture of the institution  
A picture of Immanuel Hospital  
A letter from Governor Eberhard  
The history of the Evangelical Lutheran Education Association

Bethany Lutheran College  
Old Main Time Capsule 2011 Additions

- An inventory of the original box which was opened on August 9, 2011.
- A copy of the original inventory written in German Fraktur Script and a translation thereof.

- *Anniversary Scroll*, July 1987. (Contains Clara Scholtzhauer's account of the first two years of the Ladies' College and SCY's article dealing with the years 1927-1947.)
- Pictures from the cornerstone opening of August 9, 2011.
- Opening of the Academic Year 2011-12 program, August 21, 2011.
- Copy of Pres. Dan R. Bruss' address for opening service, August 21, 2011.
- *Sigurd Christian Ylvisaker 1884-1959 A Commemorative Volume at the Centennial of His Birth*, edited by Peter T. Harstad.
- *With Hearts and Lips Forever We Shall in God Rejoice! An Anecdotal History of The Choirs of Bethany Lutheran College, Mankato, Minnesota.* Compiled by Dennis Marzolf, 2002.
- *We Believe Teach and Confess*, A Concise Doctrinal Statement of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, adopted June 1992.
- College Viewbook, 2011.
- College Academic Catalog, 2010.
- *Mankato Free Press*, August 10, 2011.
- *Bethany Scroll*, September 6, 2011.
- *Bethany Scroll*, September 18, 2011.
- *Evangelical Lutheran Hymnary*, 1996.
- *Telling the Next Generation, The Evangelical Lutheran Synod's Vision for Christian Education, 1918-2011 and Beyond*, A publication of the ELS Historical Society, edited by Ryan C. MacPherson, Paul G. Madson, and Peter M. Anthony, 2011.
- *The Lutheran Sentinel*, September 2011.
- *Report of the 94th Annual Convention of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod*, 2011.
- Pictures of the campus across the decades and a current campus map.
- DVD and Flash drive with pictures and documents.
- Flash drive from the Admissions department.
- Old Main commemorative medallion prepared by the Advancement Office for the Heritage Society, 2011.
- Old Main pewter Christmas ornament given to the Heritage Society.
- Don Moldstad homily and Erling Teigen remarks at October 3, 2011 Cornerstone ceremony.

The following note accompanied the original documents in the cornerstone (translated by Prof. Mark DeGarmeaux):

For years it has been painfully felt that in the German Lutheran Church of our country there are no educational institutions for girls. People in our circles who wanted to give their daughters a higher education, had to send their children either to the institutions of other faiths or state institutions.

In the past year, some men have joined forces to call into being just one such institution. So on 3 Aug. 1909 here in Mankato, the Evangelical Lutheran Educational Association was founded. This association has members in Minnesota, North and South Dakota, Wisconsin, Illinois, Iowa, Nebraska, Missouri, Pennsylvania, New York, Michigan, and other states. Even in Canada great interest in our association has been shown.

As the first trustees of the association were elected: Pastor Albert E. F. Emmel of St. Paul, Pastor A. Dalsler of St. James, Pastor C. J. Messerli of Lewisville, Mr. R. F. Herbert, Albert H. Silber, both from here, Judge John Glaeser of Chaska, Judge Friedrich Schweppe of St. James, Pastor Hermann Heinemann of Truman and Pastor Albert F. Winter from here.

[*Inserted line:*] Mr. C. Steiner, from here, served for the first year as Treasurer.

The purpose of this association is to give young people who do not want to be pastors and teachers an opportunity to get a solid education at our institution. Since, as already noted above, in our circles almost nothing had been done for the education of young girls, the association decided next to build an institution for girls. Schikkel Architects had drawn up plans. Based on these plans, bids for the foundations were then invited. Messrs. Blättermann and Diedel were the lowest bids.

On 12 October the contract was signed, and some days later, work on the foundations was undertaken. Under God's protection and blessing, the work progressed so far that during these days we could begin with the superstructure. The Board of Directors currently consists of the following persons:.. Pastor Albert F. Winter President, A. C. Haase Sec., A. G. Dettlaff Treasurer, A. Dasler Vice President, Pastor R. Jeske, Pastor A. C. Brinkmann, Pastor August Schlüter, Pastor Hermann Heinemann, Judge John Glaeser, and Judge Friedrich Schweppe.

A rather severe blow to our institution was the sudden death of our unforgettable brother, Pastor Albert E. F. Emmel.

Although we had to contend with many difficulties and obstacles, our gracious and merciful God so far has helped beyond our prayers and our understanding.

In the name of God we began this construction; trusting God's gracious help, we will also finish this building. God has helped up to now. He will also continue to help. We will also gratefully ascribe to Him all praise and the progress of our accomplishment. This institution should also be placed into His service alone.

*The Lord our God be gracious to us and establish the works of our hands for us; yes, may He establish the work of our hands. Ps 90:17. ■*

\*\*\*\*\*

## The Seminary Gets a Load of Wood

Reprinted from Our Great Heritage, a popular history of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod (published in 1968 on the 50th anniversary of the Synod using summaries or chapters from past publications)

*Julia Lee, born in 1869, was the second child and only daughter of Nils and Mari Lee, who farmed near Deerfield, Wisconsin. She grew up hearing stories from her parents and other relatives and friends of the Norwegian pioneers and their lives in the new country. Possessed of an acute memory, she didn't forget the stories and later, fortunately, wrote them down. For the rest of her life, she continued to write and revise them; only a few have been published. She died just short of her 103rd birthday. The story below Julia knew first-hand: her father's trip, in the winter, with wood for the new Seminary in Madison.*

**Sigurd K. Lee**

The year was 1876. It was still dark in the morning, but father and mother were up, father to feed and harness his best team, mother to get a hearty breakfast for father, for he was going to have a hard day and it was January and very cold.

The Norwegian Lutheran Synod had established their Seminary at Madison (across the street from the present Madison Lutheran School), and wood was needed for the many stoves. Madison was surrounded by more or less woodland, and a cord or two as a gift would be very welcome. Father had decided to give a cord. He had prepared the load the day before. Now, having had his breakfast, it was to hitch his horses to the sturdy bobsleigh, get a pillow made by stuffing a stout string around the top end and pound and pummel the bag flat like a pillow, as there was no place for a seat on top of the cord-wood. Then to fold one of those precious horse blankets on top of the pillow and wrap the furry sheepskin robe, home tanned and hand sewed, around his feet, knees and up over his chest and then he was ready to make the long trip of 18 miles to Madison to deliver the wood.

The day was just breaking as he drove out the gate. After driving about 2 miles he got onto the old stagecoach road, which would take him into Madison. Sleighing was fine and the roads not too hilly.

When he had crossed the 7 hill ridge it was down hill all the way to the lake. There he found a well-traveled track across Lake Monona, which would save him 3 miles. He would land about 4 blocks from the Seminary buildings. After unloading he took his horses to a livery barn, then went to call on his good friend Davidson, the shoeman, who took father home to dinner. After several hours rest for the horses, he started for home, arriving just as darkness closed the day. We children were all excited—so was mother. Father had greetings from the Davidsons and others, but of most interest to us children was that he had seen a couple of the professors and actually talked to one of them. That was something! Father went early to bed that night—he had a hard day, but it had been well spent. ■

\*\*\*\*\*

Excerpt from *An Account of Covered Wagon Days*  
by Mathilde Berg Grevstad, translated by Agnes Grevstad Lee

*The covered wagon of Ole-Ivar and Johanne Berg was one of eight in a wagon train that, in the summer of 1871, made its way from the area of Rushford, Minnesota to Lake Park, Minnesota, then known as "High Siding." Their eldest daughter, Mathilde, nine years old, remembered the trip vividly and later wrote about the journey and of the family's early years in the Lake Park pioneer settlement. Mathilde later married a Norwegian Synod pastor, Rev. Jens Grevstad, and their eldest daughter, Agnes, translated her mother's recollections from Norwegian into English. "An Account of Covered Wagon Days," by Mathilde Berg Grevstad, translated by Agnes Grevstad Lee, was printed for family members in 1975. The first selection is about the winter of 1872-73 and the second selection tells of a visit to their home of a Lutheran pastor, with his new bride.*

**Sigurd K. Lee**

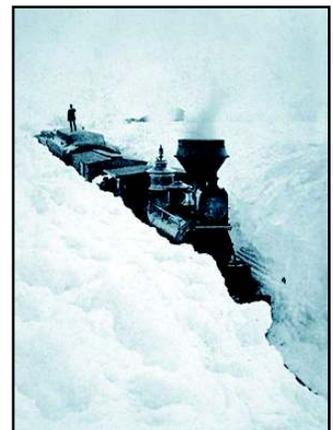
**Winters were bad.** Below zero temperatures and howling blizzards were common. It behooved the people to be prepared with plenty of food and fuel. Many lives were lost in the Northwest especially in the winter of 1872-73. The worst of these blizzards occurred in early January, the seventh, eighth, and ninth. The day dawned mild and sunny. Many farmers took advantage of the nice weather to come in for provisions. But just after noon a dark cloud appeared in the northwest, and before we knew it the storm was upon us. There was no question of starting for home, although one man, a widower, who had left his two little boys at home, insisted on starting out despite the warnings of others. He became so confused in the fury of the storm and the whipping of the needle-like snow, that he completely lost his sense of direction and froze to death.

Several of the men came to our house for lodging. One of them had a team of horses for which they managed to find shelter in a hay shed adjoining our barn. Another man had a wife and four children at home, and he could neither sleep nor eat as long as the storm lasted. On the fourth day he set out and upon arriving home, was overjoyed to find his family safe and sound, although completely snowed under. His wife had been able to open a window wide enough so that their ten year old son could wriggle through and begin shoveling snow away from the door. The cattle had had neither feed nor drink for three days.

When the men went out to do chores, several of them would walk a few steps apart, just so they were able to distinguish the one ahead. One time they became confused—they couldn't find the barn! And no wonder—they were standing on top of it! It was completely snowed under. The snow was so hard one could walk on top of it.

Many days elapsed before the trains came through. The big snow plows were not able to make any headway without the help of men with shovels. So there was plenty of work for the men.

Never have I seen so much snow, and the winter continued with one bliz-



zard after the other, so that when the spring thaw came there were ponds and puddles everywhere. ...

**During the month of November**, Pastor Rosholt visited us on his way to his congregations in Wilkins County about 30-40 miles to the southwest. He had been told to take care of the congregations in Becker and Clay Counties until they could secure a pastor of their own. Father was expecting him but did not know exactly when. When he and his bride did come it was in the middle of the night in a howling snowstorm. The train was many hours late. Fortunately a man who was at the depot, led them along the track to our house. He didn't preach for us this time on account of the inclement weather and he had to get on to his own congregations. But how? Using oxen was out of the question—they were too slow—they would all freeze to death. But Father knew of a man who had horses. So he put on his skis and found the man who promised to drive them to Wilkins County. Half way there they were obliged to stop at an Indian camp to seek aid for Mrs. Rosholt whose feet were frozen. An Indian squaw knew what to do, and thanks to her, Mrs. Rosholt suffered no permanent harm. ■

\*\*\*\*\*

## 150th Anniversary of Luther College by Craig Ferkenstad

Of the institutions of the old Norwegian Synod, the most significant was Luther College. October of this past year marked the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the start of Luther College.

Already, four years after its organization, the Norwegian Synod began a fund for the establishment of “its own Norwegian Lutheran institution of learning” and in the same year, 1857, the synod began to gather money for this purpose. In the meantime, the synod sent her students to Concordia College and Seminary in St. Louis, Missouri.

With the start of the Civil War, a site was selected for the school in Decorah, Iowa (see the November 2010 issue of *Oak Leaves*). Until the main building was dedicated in 1865, classes first were held in a vacant parsonage near LaCrosse, Wisconsin. At that time, the school was known as the “Norwegian Lutheran School for the Education of Ministers.” Twelve students, along with two teachers and their families, occupied the parsonage.

The purpose of the school was to prepare pastors and teachers, but it also was to provide a general higher education—a liberal arts education—for the young men who chose to enter other professions which required more than a basic education.

After one year in Wisconsin, the school moved to Decorah, Iowa. The two professors were the Rev. Laur. Larsen, who served as the president, and the Rev. F. A. Schmit. Soon after the school moved to Decorah, the Rev. Nils Brandt joined the faculty.

The establishment of Luther College has a lasting legacy because this is where the future pastors of the Norwegian Synod received their pre-seminary train-

ing. All thirteen of the pastors whose attendance was recorded at the 1918 re-organization convention of our synod, at Lime Creek, were graduates of Luther College.

The dedication day for the main building was held on October 14, 1865. It is estimated that 6,000 people attended the dedication which was the largest mass gathering of Norwegian Lutherans which had ever occurred in North America. Norwegian Synod President, H. A. Preus, preached the dedicatory sermon. Dinner was served to between 1,500 and 2,000 people. That evening, the departing guests could see the Latin words “Soli Deo Gloria” illuminated by candles in the windows of the main building. ■



*Courtesy of the Luther College Archives, Decorah, Iowa  
This image is presumed to be taken in 1865 at the time of the dedication of the first Main Building at Luther College.*

## Oral history: Christopher Faye

Interviewed by Philip Kaminsky, April-May 2010

“I was on the Hubbard Milling Company Board of Directors. At one meeting I told my fellow members that Ruth was a classmate of Marvin Schwan and a lady on the board looked at me with feigned derision and said, ‘And she married you?’ And I said, ‘Well, no one’s perfect.’”



**Biographical Overview...** Christopher Faye was born on November 28, 1926 to Christopher and Alice (nee Jenson) Faye in Champaign, Illinois. He was baptized within a few days of his birth. He started school at age three, but was not permitted to enter first grade until he was five, for he took a “post graduate year of kindergarten,” and became “an expert on sand box and rhythm sticks.” Among other things he discovered the difference between a teeter and a totter. He attributes most of his later success to this extraordinary educational advantage.

He lived in Urbana and Champaign (twin cities) until 1946. In 1946 he attended Bethany Lutheran College for a year earning an A.A. Previous to attending Bethany, he was a student at the University of Illinois. After graduating from Bethany he returned to the University of Illinois, changed his major from Engineering to Business, and graduated with honors in 1948 with a Bachelor of Science degree.

**After that...** “Ruth and I attended Bethany at different times. A mutual friend, Lois (Iverson) Pieper, arranged our first meeting. A curious fact about that meeting was that Ruth had promised this friend to stop at her apartment in Mankato. She left her parochial teaching job in Good Thunder, Minnesota, late in the afternoon. When she came to the block in which the apartment was located, she decided to

drive home. Shortly after that decision, she told me she stepped on the brakes abruptly, and decided to continue around the block and meet her friend. If she had not made that decision, it is highly unlikely that we would ever have been married. My summary, ‘Ruth got it into her head to go around the block so she ended up with a blockhead.’” He married Ruth A. Molnau at Trinity Lutheran Church (of the Missouri Synod) in Waconia, Minnesota in a service conducted by Pastor Robert G. Heyne.

**Concerning the Wedding Ceremony...** Ruth now says: “My wedding dress was originally intended for a European princess. Dayton’s [Department Store] bought the dress as they thought it would be an appropriate display for their home store in Minneapolis on the occasion of their 50th anniversary. I came in with all my bridesmaids; the clerk looked at me; she called the buyer; that buyer called some more buyers—there were about five people from Dayton’s looking at me. Eventually they decided that the dress would be a perfect fit. They reduced the price so that my mother, a thrifty shopper, was willing to buy it. The lace alone in that dress was perhaps worth about seven or eight thousand dollars. They sold it to my mother at an absurdly low price. My bridesmaids spread the information about the real value (not the price my mother paid since they didn’t know that) through town. At that time, in 1952, seven or eight thousand dollars was like sixty thousand dollars today. The word spread through Waconia. It was a very small town at the time, filled with a lot of curious people. When I approached the church I said, ‘Oh, there are a lot of people! Why are so many cars parked at the church? We didn’t invite that many people.’ It seems that the multitude of curious people (irrespective of their religion) decided to get religion and strangely enough to go to a Lutheran church on that day. I now view that wedding dress as a form of mission work. Since my home church only held around six hundred people, the aisles were so crowded as well as the church entrance that I couldn’t get into the church. Dayton’s representative at the service implored the people to back up so the bride could enter the church. Eventually the church service was able to start. The wedding bells would have worn out if Dayton’s had not intervened.”

**Chris now returns...** “That day (October 19, 1952) was the start of the happiest time of my life. That state of joy has continued to this day. Ruth is wonderful. I do have a very strange characteristic—when I am happy, I cry. At my fiftieth wedding anniversary, I couldn’t even talk because I knew if I tried to talk I would cry. My dear father also did this. What I would have said if I could have spoken was

as follows: I would not trade places with anyone in the world, because no one else is married to Ruth. Furthermore she puts up with me; like when I explained to her and then illustrated the fact that one good turn gets most of the blankets. Even before we were married, I discovered I would have to be careful in how I spoke to her. I remember telling her that I thought we should serve doughnuts at our wedding dinner. She wondered why. I said it was holey food. She then told me that I was depriving some village of their rightful idiot.



50<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION  
OF THE OCTOBER 19, 1952 WEDDING OF  
CHRISTOPHER AND RUTH (MOLNAU) FAYE

HELD AT MT. OLIVE LUTHERAN CHURCH  
OCTOBER 19, 2002

“When I proposed to Ruth, I did so based upon my belief that I would be able to support her. I had no home, was renting a one-room bedroom, and was only \$26,000 in debt. Within about six months, she applied for a job as a colored maid. How could this happen? It happened because I had a very rich uncle and he gave me a wedding present. It was a two-year tour of the East. During those two years he paid for me to visit every historical city of importance in the East. You may have heard of my uncle since he was so very rich. His name was Uncle Sam. In 1953, I was called up by selective service. I applied for and received a direct commission in the Air Force. Then they experienced a budgetary reduction. So I applied for and received a direct commission in the Army. But I was drafted first. I was told I could serve as a Second Lieutenant in the Army if I would agree to serve for three years. I

then decided not to serve as an officer. So I stayed in the Army as a private. This was when Ruth applied for a job as a colored maid. An officer on the post ran that ad; it was at a time that one could word ads like that. That officer hired Ruth when he first met her, and asked her to take care of his children. That officer also happened to be the Adjutant General of the Post. He asked Ruth to ask me to come to his home and visit. After our visit he decided he could use me immediately at his headquarters so he changed my orders. My orders were to go to the Army Finance School in Indianapolis, Indiana. At that point the Army headquarters in Washington D.C. intervened and ordered me to go to Germany. After arriving at my point of embarkation, I read some Army regulations and discovered I could not be ordered overseas unless I had been in the service for at least sixteen weeks. I called this to the Army’s attention, and they decided to send me to the Headquarters of the Army Chemical Center at Edgewood, Maryland. Fortunately for our cash-flow problems, Ruth was able to get a position teaching third grade in public school. She told me that after being married to me for a fairly short time, she now had a better grasp on how to deal with third graders. I remained in Edgewood for the rest of my time in the service as a member of a group called ‘Scientific and Professional Personnel.’ This was the location from which we conducted our two-year tour of the East. Shortly before my scheduled discharge a wealthy member of a church in which Ruth was serving as organist offered to hire me just so Ruth would stay as their organist. If I would work hard I might have been able to get the highest honor that can be awarded to any accountant—my name assigned to a new tax loophole. But as promising as Ruth thought that would not have been, we simply returned to Mankato and went into business.

“One way of summarizing my entire military career would be as follows: Due to my natural aptitude for the military, I went in as a Second Lieutenant and came out as a Sergeant.”

**My father...** “My father, Christopher Urdahl Faye was born in South Africa to Christopher and Marie (nee Hoel) Faye. He is remembered for his missionary work in South Africa, his position as a professor at the University of Illinois, and his many scholarly works. Since he died long before Google started, references were entered by others. One of his best-known works, ‘The Conversation of the Devil with the Dying Christian’ was buried in the cornerstone of the Bethany Lutheran College Memorial Library. This booklet is available on the internet.

“He was a master linguist. Growing up in South Africa he spoke English, a dialect of Dutch, Norwegian, and Zulu. He graduated from Hurst College and was awarded a scholarship to and matriculated at Oxford in England. He then declined the Oxford scholarship as he felt that it would impose a moral duty upon him to become an Anglican minister. He then attended Luther College in Decorah, Iowa and graduated from the Old Norwegian Synod Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota. He then served for ten years as a missionary in South Africa. His missionary work was terminated when he could not agree with the theological positions taken by what is now ELCA and the church of Norway. When this happened he returned to the United States.

“In the United States he acquired some advanced degrees and became a professor at the University of Illinois. Among other activities, he passed examinations in 18 languages. His nickname at the University of Illinois library was ‘The Walking Encyclopedia.’ Taking advantage of his linguistic facility, I explained to my fellow high school students that as a magician there was nothing I couldn’t read. A fellow student brought me an incomprehensible book. He then selected a page for me to read. I then explained that I needed to recite some secret magic spell that was too dangerous for anyone else to hear. I took it to my father. He pulled a book from one of his bookcases and it took him about 15 minutes to provide me with a typed translation of the asked-for page. When I asked my father what language it was written in, he told me it was a hill-dialect in India. My friend’s father was stationed in India, hence the book. I then recognized the true identity of the magician in our family.”

**And after that...** “I went into business. My \$26,000 investment was worthwhile. I eventually owned a four-story building in downtown Mankato, served as a long-time Vice Chairman of the Board of Directors of a local bank, was a long-time member of the Board of Directors of Hubbard Milling Company (a business that had its roots in Mankato about 120 years ago and became international in scope), functioned as a licensed real estate broker, owned an investment company, sold a number of fact-free articles to national magazines, had a weekly column in the ‘Mankato Free Press’ for several years (which at the time was owned by the Wall Street Journal), and also taught accounting, business law, speech, and salesmanship in a business college. I also served on the Board of Trustees of our synod.

“Shortly after our return to Mankato, Ruth taught organ at Bethany Lutheran College and had private piano students. At that time she started playing the

organ for Mt. Olive. She continued playing the organ for various churches for forty-nine years. She also entered into the world of business. She became the first Minnesota woman who was President of a cable franchise and the chief owner of the company that operated the franchise. She worked with me as Secretary/Treasurer of several of our companies. Of all the activities in which she engaged, the one she enjoyed most was playing the organ for our Mt. Olive Church services.”

**To summarize our life together:** “We are supremely happy. For we know there is a much better place where we will live forever with our Christian relatives, friends, and most importantly the Triune God.”

**Our Death Is Not The End Of Our Life  
It Is  
The Beginning Of Our Life Eternal**

\*\*\*\*\*

**A remembrance of Norman Holte and how he impacted the lives of students at Bethany**  
by Carolyn Schneider Harstad

As a new student in the fall of 1954, I was dismayed to learn that the Bethany Lutheran College library closed at 5 PM! Amanda Tjernagel (now Madson) and I bemoaned the fact that there was no place to study since the dorms were too noisy. We both carried 21 credits, and had lots of reading that required quiet for concentration. Where could we go?

I worked on the Bethany Scroll and the yearbook, so I had a key to the Scroll Office. This small room had no window in the door and only a window to the woods. What a perfect spot! We decided we could "sneak" into the locked classroom building by climbing out the third floor girls' dorm window, crossing the small graveled roof and entering the classroom building by the window on the other side. Late each afternoon we checked to be sure that the classroom window was unlocked. The two of us cautiously made our way to the forbidden spot each evening after supper where we studied until about 10 PM. All dorm lights were put out at 10:15 PM and the dorm windows were subsequently locked by the student night watchman—guess who? Peter Harstad!

Well, you guessed it. Before long we were caught, but not by the night watchman. We were marched into Mr. Holte's office, who was then the Registrar, and asked why we thought it was necessary to spend time in that off-limits spot—and after hours at that. We tried to explain our logic, but before long we both burst into tears. Kindly Mr. Holte took time to calm us down and soon after our meeting he contacted Professor Vernon Gerlach to devise a workable solution. The education students were organized into volunteer groups to man the library for a few nights each week. Because dorm lights went out at 10:15 PM, the library had to close about 9 PM but even those few extra hours were a blessing. Bethany students of the mid to late 50s were forever grateful to Mr. Holte and Mr. Gerlach for coming to the rescue and providing a "legal" place to study. ■

**Oak Leaves**  
ELS Historical Society  
6 Browns Court  
Mankato, MN 56001

## **Renew your membership!**

**ELS Historical Society**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Send completed form and check (see box below right  
for type of membership and correct amount) to:

**ELS Historical Society**  
**6 Browns Court — Mankato, MN 56001**

**Oak Leaves** is published periodically by the Evangelical Lutheran Synod Historical Society, 6 Browns Court — Mankato, MN 56001; [www.els-history.org](http://www.els-history.org)

**Editors:** Herman and Cheryl Harstad - [heharstad@charter.net](mailto:heharstad@charter.net)

**Board of Directors:** Mark Harstad (Chair), Peter Anthony, Craig Ferkenstad, Betsy Hermanson, Michael Lilienthal, Ryan MacPherson, Paul Madson, John Moldstad, Marguerite Ylvisaker

**Oak Leaves** welcomes articles of both Synodical and local significance for publication. Articles may be edited for style, clarity, or length to allow for publication. Each issue will be deposited in the archives of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

### **MEMBERSHIP**

All membership renewals are due **June 1**  
**Voting Membership:**  
\$10/year: individual  
\$15/year: husband & wife  
**Associate Membership:**  
\$15/year: individual  
\$25/year: institutional  
\$5/year: student  
**Lifetime Membership:**  
\$200