

Class of 1959 50th Reunion



The Olsen Family: Brad, Amy, Bobbie, and David.

*"Literary institutions are founded and endowed for the common good."
—Joseph McKeen, first president of Bowdoin College, 1802*

President McKeen's vision has always inspired me, and it provided motivation for the gift that we made to Bowdoin, in conjunction with the upcoming Class of '59 50th reunion.

I asked the Bowdoin staff to help me develop a plan for our gift that would be useful to the College, while also fitting in with our dedication to the "common good." This resulted in the Olsen Family Fund – Center for the Common Good.

The new Center for the Common Good advances the College's legacy of service, by encouraging community engagement and leadership opportunities. Funding helps expand the concept of public service, by developing community service opportunities for students.

So what have I been doing for the past fifty years since Bowdoin? After majoring in economics and government, I spent my professional life in insurance brokerage, retiring in 1997 as Chairman and CEO of Johnson & Higgins. I'm currently a Director of Marsh & McLennan Companies. After my retirement, we created The Olsen Family Foundation, which is dedicated to making gifts to the arts and education.

My wife Bobbie and I live in Salisbury, Connecticut. Bobbie earned her degree from Mary Washington College of the University of Virginia and was a copywriter for several New York advertising agencies. We have two children, Brad '89 and Amy (St. Lawrence University '90). Among Brad's volunteer activities at Bowdoin was teaching creative writing in the Brunswick public schools; this led to his current career as Assistant Professor of Education at the University of California, Santa Cruz, where he lives with his wife Jeanine. Amy lives in suburban Chicago with her husband Steve and three children, after having worked in TV network sales for many years. She has been volunteering for various organizations since high school. Bobbie and I have served non-profit organizations everywhere we've lived: California, Illinois, Texas, New York, Connecticut, and Florida.

I served Bowdoin in many volunteer capacities, including 17 years as Overseer and Trustee. I'm currently gift co-chair for our 50th reunion.

I thank the Bowdoin staff for working with me to develop a plan that fits with my commitment to the common good. Our gift is just one example of the many creative ways to give.

I look forward to seeing all of you in 2009.

David Olsen '59

Bowdoin