The Axel Theimer Endowed Choral/Vocal Music Education Scholarship Fund was established in 2017 by Dr. Theimer to benefit students majoring in choral and vocal music education at Saint John’s University (SJU) and the College of Saint Benedict (CSB).

The CSB/SJU Music Department strives to provide the finest music education possible for music majors as well as for students majoring in other fields. An emphasis on both individual and group performance plus a fervent commitment to teaching combine to create a strong, vital department that contributes much to the quality of life on campus. The Music Department is accredited by the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM).

The Music Department combines musical training with a liberal arts education to prepare students for careers within and outside the field of music. Many graduates continue their music training at graduate programs, share their love of music as instructors, or take to the stage as professional musicians. Others have found harmony outside of music in careers such as medicine or business.

Theimer received much of his training in Vienna, earning his B.A. from Saint John’s University and completing his studies at the University of Minnesota with a M.F.A. in Choral Conducting and a D.M.A. in Vocal Performance. Theimer has opened up the world of vocal music to generations of students and is a tireless representative of the arts at the state, national, and international levels.

Nearly 50 years ago, Theimer arrived in Collegeville from his native Austria, with over a decade of involvement with the Vienna Boys Choir and the Chorus Vienensis, and began his teaching career at Saint John’s University and the College of Saint Benedict in the fall of 1969. He continues to teach choral conducting and vocal pedagogy and in the past had a very active voice studio, taught basic music theory, piano, diction, vocal and choral literature and musicianship skills.
His background and experience – complemented by his love for music, for teaching and his desire to be a life-long learner – allowed him to become an integral part of the ever-evolving choral program at these Benedictine institutions.

As director of both the Saint John's Men's Chorus and the CSB/SJU Chamber Choir (a choir he founded when CSB and SJU began to coordinate their academic programs in the early 70s), it was always his dream and goal to provide student singers with the opportunity to experience and enjoy music at the highest possible level and to share this experience with audiences on campus and on the road.

When he expanded the international profile of the choirs, touring to Europe, the Bahamas, Japan, South Korea, and China, he showed his students how to be gracious guests and good representatives of our institutions and our nation. He has been a role model to students who have gone on to become music teachers, liturgical music directors, and performers.

As faculty member and executive director of the VoiceCare Network, he has shown his commitment to the self-care of the musician and the value of collaborating with other vocal disciplines. As the co-founder and former music director of the National Catholic Youth Choir, he has inspired young people to praise God through music.

As the founder and music director of both Kantorei, a Twin Cities (Minneapolis/Saint Paul) choral ensemble, and the Amadeus Chamber Symphony, a chamber orchestra for central Minnesota musicians and audiences, he has supported our graduates and their colleagues in the lifelong pursuit of making beautiful music while also contributing to the richness of the musical arts in our state and in our local community.

Theimer’s success has been recognized by other organizations. He received the Choir Director of the Year Award from the American Choral Directors Association of Minnesota in 2001, was inducted into the Minnesota Music Educators Association Hall of Fame in 2004 and in 2011 received the ACDA-MN F. Melius Christiansen Lifetime Achievement Award.

All the while, Theimer has remained true to his passion – the intrinsic value of sharing music.

We invite you to support the The Axel Theimer Endowed Choral/Vocal Music Education Scholarship Fund with a generous gift.

For more information, please contact Brad Neary at bneary@csbsju.edu or 612-810-9344.