

**July 26, 2011**            **For immediate release**  
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## ***Convocation for Norway's King and Queen*** **Their Majesties King Harald V and Queen Sonja to visit Luther College and Vesterheim**

DECORAH, Iowa -- Luther College will be visited by royalty for the eighth time in its 150-year history when Their Majesties King Harald V and Queen Sonja of Norway visit the college Oct. 13.

The royal visit is in honor of Luther's Sesquicentennial Celebration in 2011. Founded in 1861 by the Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Church, Luther was the first college established by Norwegian immigrants in the United States.

The royal visit will include a morning convocation in the Luther Center for Faith and Life. King Harald V will speak and Luther President Richard Torgerson will present Their Majesties with the Spirit of Luther Award. The celebration will feature music by the Nordic Choir and Symphony Orchestra.

Following the visit to Luther the King and Queen will tour Vesterheim Norwegian-American Museum in downtown Decorah.

A limited number of tickets will be available for the Oct. 13 Royal Convocation at Luther College and will be distributed through an online lottery process. Beginning Aug. 16, persons can go to the following website, [https://www.luther.edu/150/events/royal\\_visit](https://www.luther.edu/150/events/royal_visit), to request one or two tickets. The online lottery will close on Thursday, Sept. 8, at 5 p.m. for all guests.

Tickets are \$20 each. Luther students, staff and faculty will have a separate lottery for complimentary tickets. For security reasons, tickets are nontransferable.

Norwegian Royalty have visited Luther seven times, the first of which was a visit by Crown Prince Olav and Princess Martha in 1939. After being crowned king, His Majesty King Olav V returned Luther in 1968, 1975 and 1987.

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The Oct. 13 program will be King Harald V's third visit to Luther College, following a visit in 1965 as Crown Prince and 1995 as King. The program will be Her Majesty Queen Sonja's second visit.

Crown Prince Haakon, the son of Their Majesties King Harald V and Queen Sonja, visited in 1999.

The Oct. 13 visit will also be the eighth time Norwegian royalty has visited Vesterheim.

In 1939 Crown Prince Olav and Princess Martha brought to the museum a gift of artifacts from Norway. In 1975 King Olav dedicated Vesterheim's newly restored building in Decorah. Crown Prince Haakon dedicated the museum's Amdal-Odland Heritage Center in 1999.

Vesterheim, which was founded at Luther College, showcases American immigration through the lens of the Norwegian-American experience. The museum houses more than 24,000 artifacts in its 16 buildings in Decorah and two National Register sites outside the city. Its exhibitions and programs include historic and contemporary Norwegian folk and fine arts and classes in Norwegian culture and folk art.

The Decorah visit is the royal couple's first stop on an official 10-day state visit to the United States. They will also visit Northfield, Minneapolis and Duluth, Minn. before traveling to New York City where they will participate in the 100th Anniversary Gala of the American-Scandinavian Foundation.

The Luther Sesquicentennial Celebration, based on the theme "Transformed by the Journey," reflects the holistic nature of a Luther education, with events and projects celebrating the college's Norwegian heritage, location, curriculum, music and the arts, worship, athletics, environmental stewardship and service ethic.