Lynn Arthur Steen was born in Chicago and grew up on Staten Island, New York, where his mother sang with the N.Y. City Center Opera and his father conducted the Wagner College Choir. In 1965, four years after graduating from Luther College in Iowa, Steen completed a Ph.D. in mathematics at MIT and joined the St. Olaf faculty. He retired in 2009 and is now Professor Emeritus of Mathematics.

Early in his career Steen focused on teaching and developing research experiences for undergraduates. One result was the widely used reference book *Counterexamples in Topology* (1970), co-edited with J. Arthur Seebach, Jr. and partly authored by St. Olaf students. Another was a gradual change in mathematics at St. Olaf from a narrow discipline for the few to an inviting major of value to any liberal arts graduate.

As his teaching led Steen to investigate links between mathematics and other fields, he began writing about new developments in mathematics for audiences of non-mathematicians. In the 1980s, Steen helped lead national efforts to modernize the teaching of calculus and other aspects of undergraduate mathematics, serving as editor of the widely cited *Calculus for a New Century: A Pump, not a Filter* (1988). During 1985-86 he served as president of the 30,000-member Mathematical Association of America and in 1989 as chairman of the Council of Scientific Society Presidents.

Steen's work on collegiate mathematics drew him also into the nascent movement to establish standards for school mathematics. From 1992 through 1995, on leave from St. Olaf, Steen served as executive director of the Mathematical Sciences Education Board at the National Academy of Sciences in Washington, DC. Subsequently, Steen helped the Washington-based Achieve, Inc. pioneer grade-by-grade standards intended to simultaneously meet the mathematical requirements of college and career.

Steen's work on different sides of the school-college boundary seeded his interest in the imperative of numeracy or quantitative literacy (QL) for active citizens in today's data-driven society. Here the challenge is not just to help students learn to do mathematics when required or prompted, but to make evidence-based reasoning an ingrained habit of mind. This work helped stimulate a wide variety of QL programs on campuses around the country and led to the development of the interdisciplinary National Numeracy Network.

During his career Steen has lectured in over a dozen different countries and is the author or editor of numerous articles and books including *Everybody Counts* (1989), *Why Numbers Count* (1997), and *Mathematics and Democracy* (2001). He is a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) and recipient of several honorary Sc.D. degrees.

Steen's wife Mary is Associate Professor Emerita of English and former chair of the Department of English at St. Olaf College. They have two grown daughters, Margaret and Catherine, and six grandsons.