

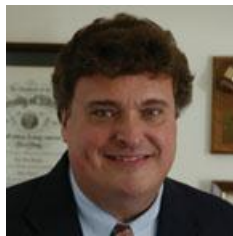
# COMMUNIQUE

LINDENWOOD  
AN E-NEWSLETTER FOR  
UNIVERSITY EMPLOYEES

## Stuhler Named 2013 Employee of the Year

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Eric Stuhler, who serves as Lindenwood University's in-house legal counsel, was honored Saturday evening at the annual Christmas party as 2013 Employee of the Year.



The event was held at the Columns Banquet Center.

Stuhler was recognized for his yeoman's work organizing Lindenwood's highly successful Employee Picnic each summer.

"I am very happy and proud that the work put into our Employee Picnic is being recognized," Stuhler said. "The picnic has grown from a very simple idea into a major University event thanks to the support of Dr. Evans and the administration."

More than 600 people attended the seventh annual Lindenwood University Employee Picnic in July. Stuhler said the picnic started humbly in 2007 and has become a wonderful tradition.

He said Lindenwood's 2 1/2-hour picnic has developed into nine months of planning, with every nuance and detail outlined in a binder he calls the "picnic bible." Stuhler's picnic staff only grows as the Stuhler family grows. His wife, Debby, helps, as well as daughters Allison and Amanda. Now, he has a son-in-law, Joe Radi, who has joined in the fun. In addition, many employees volunteer to help.

Stuhler said he loves to offer old-fashioned treats, games, and prizes for the kids. He encouraged all employees to mark their calendars for July 23—the date of the eighth employee picnic.

## Did You Know?

**Did you know that before Lindenwood committed to creating the Belleville campus it had considered Cahokia, Ill.? When the plan fell through, a group convinced President Spellmann and Belleville officials that their town would be a better location. This year marks the 10th anniversary of the Belleville campus.**

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## Matthew Bruce Defends Dissertation

Matthew J. Aragon Bruce, PhD, Assistant Professor of Religion, successfully defended his dissertation, "Theology without Volunteerism: Understanding Karl Barth's Doctrine of Divine Freedom," on Nov. 21 in Princeton, N.J.



Bruce's dissertation explored several current debates over the nature of divine freedom. The topic is hotly debated among scholars working under the legacy of the Swiss Protestant Theologian Karl Barth (1886-1968), who is often regarded as the most significant theologian of the 20th century. Bruce's dissertation argued that the current debate among "Barthians" shares much in common with medieval controversies over free agency.

Bruce noted that the two major theories tied to free agency are intellectualism and voluntarism. He argued that the voluntarist model is contrary to both the witness of the Bible and much of the Christian tradition, while also arguing that the voluntarist model needs to be rejected.

The main argument Bruce used to reject voluntarism was that the theory results in a depiction of a God who is arbitrary, unstable, and little more than a hungry tyrant without constrictions. He elaborated on this argument by stating that voluntarist notions have led to particularly disastrous results in Western societies, because they give theological support to destructive ideologies such as feudalism, fascism, and their convergence in contemporary free-market capitalism.

Bruce holds an undergraduate degree in classics from Wheaton College, a master's degree in divinity from Princeton Theological Seminary, and a master's degree in theology from the University of Edinburgh. He enjoys teaching religion and modernity and contemporary inter-religious Islam and Christian dialogue. His research interests focus on Christian intellectual history, with a special interest in medieval and modern reflection on divine and human agency.

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