

ST. LOUIS' PREMIER SPEAKER SERIES FINDS A NEW HOME

Written by Linda Stroud

Photos courtesy of The Hammond Institute Lindenwood University

In 1955, Henry F. Langenberg and a few others started something called The Discussion Club. And over the following 62 years, the Discussion Club became something of an institution which held the distinction of being St. Louis' premier interactive speaker series. The Club hosted events where St. Louis area leaders and business owners could come together, share a meal, and discuss issues facing the community. And they brought in prominent speakers who spoke on topics like limited government, entrepreneurial and cultural issues, as well as the free market and traditional values.

It was a formula that served the community and worked well for decades. But when Henry's son took over as Board Chairman in 2014, he and other Board members realized it was time to freshen up the format for younger generations - students and young professionals - in the greater St. Louis area. They started looking into how the group could continue, but broaden its reach. And in 2017, The Discussion Club found a new home, took on a new name, and is poised to move solidly into the future.

The Hammond Institute for Free Enterprise at Lindenwood University has taken the reins. And they are rising to the challenge of furthering the vision of The Discussion Club's founders all those years ago. Now known as the H. F. Langenberg Memorial Speaker Series, the events will continue to enlighten and inform a whole new audience.

Dr. Howard Wall, Director of the Hammond Institute and a Professor of Economics in the Plaster School of Business & Entrepreneurship at Lindenwood University, sees this as an opportunity to not only keep the spirit of the now dissolved Discussion Club alive, but to also increase awareness and extend the reach of programs the Hammond Institute offers.

The Hammond Institute has been hosting events that spark debate



and engage the community since its founding in 2013. With a mission to foster free enterprise and civil and religious liberty through the examination of market-oriented approaches to economic and social issues, they've brought in a wide range of speakers to get the conversations going and get people thinking. But Wall says, "It's a little different from other schools who bring in a speaker with a one-sided view and they're shouted down. We don't have any of that going on here. What we really like to do is have people with opposing views come in and have panels. We've done that a lot. The Q & A is the most important part." That formula has been very successful so far and has prompted spirited, yet respectful, debate.

In recent years, the Hammond Institute has hosted speakers and panel discussions through its three Centers of interest – Ethics, Economics and Entrepreneurship – highlighting topics such as free speech and inclusion, how policies affect racial polarization, and the cost of crime in our society. And there is an event scheduled for September on the topic The Causes of Mass Incarceration with Douglas Husak, Professor of Philosophy at Rutgers University.

Wall points out that the Langenberg Speaker Series will have a more narrow focus of addressing economics and history from the free-market, classical liberal perspective of individual, constitutional freedoms and limited government that fits within the broader scheme of greater dialogue on a wide range of topics. The Hammond Institute plans to host two events per year – one per semester. The events will be held at the Missouri Athletic Club – West Clubhouse and will feature speakers representing opposing views, discussion, and refreshments, all at no cost to attendees.

On Wednesday, October 11, 2017, Michael Munger, Director of Undergraduate Studies and the PPE Program at Duke University, will present the inaugural program for the Langenberg Speaker Series, Tomorrow 3.0: The New Sharing Economy. Doors will open at 5:30 pm. The program will begin at 6:00.

To view upcoming events, please visit the Hammond Institute for Free Enterprise online at www.Hammond.Institute. □

