



*Press Release Monday, May 9, 2011*

**Contact:** Ed Jones  
Director of Marketing  
[edjones@bac.edu](mailto:edjones@bac.edu)  
(704) 461-6848

## **Two Belmont Abbey College Administrators Receive Patriot Award**

**Belmont, NC, May 9, 2011:** The Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR), an agency of the U.S. Department of Defense, has recognized Dr. Bill Thierfelder, President of Belmont Abbey College, and Ken Davison, Vice President of College Relations, with the agency's Patriot Award. The Patriot Award program is designed to recognize employers who support a strong National Guard and Reserve force. Employers qualify for recognition when they practice leadership and personnel policies that support employee participation in the Guard and Reserve.

Thierfelder and Davison were nominated for the award by Belmont Abbey College's Associate Director of Strategic Development and Grants, Aaron Harper. Harper is a retired Marine Sergeant whose wife, North Carolina Army National Guard Major Michele Peeler Harper, was deployed in Iraq in 2008 and 2009 as a helicopter pilot and brigade administrative officer.

Harper cited several reasons for his nominations: "First, I'm very appreciative of the support my family received from the College while my wife was deployed overseas," Harper said. "Second, I'm grateful to my boss, Ken Davison, and to President Thierfelder for allowing me to adjust my work schedule to help me take care of my family while my wife is fulfilling her other military obligations. Finally, my fellow Marines and I are deeply grateful for the support Belmont Abbey College has shown for Marines and their families through the Marine Mud Challenges the College has hosted on campus for the last four years - and will host again on September 10, 2011. Thanks to those Mud Challenges, over \$100,000 has been donated to support Marines and their families in the Charlotte area, and at the Wounded Warrior Battalion at Camp Lejeune, which helps Marines and their families get back on their feet after the Marines have suffered major injuries."

Retired Army Colonel Tony Clark presented a framed certificate of appreciation to Dr. Thierfelder and Mr. Davison at Belmont Abbey College on May 9.

"Belmont Abbey College strongly supports the U.S. military every way we can, whether it's through our ROTC program, through our personnel policies for employees like Aaron Harper, through the Mud Challenges, or through our Adult Degree Program, which is honored to help veterans or currently serving U.S. military personnel achieve their dream of earning a college degree," says Ken Davison, a graduate of the U.S. Air Force Academy and himself a veteran.

To learn more about the Mud Challenge, go to [www.carolinamarines.org](http://www.carolinamarines.org).

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### **About Belmont Abbey College**

Belmont Abbey College finds its center in Jesus Christ and believes in the development of the whole person – in mind, body and spirit. Founded in 1876 by Benedictine monks, the College is home to more than 1600 students. *The Newman Guide* calls Belmont Abbey College one of the top Catholic colleges in America for faithfulness and affordability, and *First Things* Magazine recently named the Abbey America's #1 "School On The Rise, Filled With Excitement." Located just 10 miles west of Charlotte, N.C., Belmont Abbey College is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. For more information about the College, please visit [www.belmontabbeycollege.edu](http://www.belmontabbeycollege.edu).