



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Oct. 10, 2024

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Hillsdale College Graduate School Hosts Statesmanship Colloquium in Honor of Charles R. Kesler

The conference included a keynote address by Kesler and panel discussions of some of his students' writings.

Hillsdale College's Van Andel Graduate School of Statesmanship, in conjunction with the Center for Citizenship and Constitutional Government at the University of Notre Dame, hosted a conference Oct. 3-5 titled "Saving the Republic: Statesmanship Colloquium in Honor of Charles R. Kesler."

"Charles' career reflects this statesmanlike dedication to both the theoretical and the practical," said Graduate Dean Ronald J. Pestritto in his introduction to Kesler's keynote address. "As penetrating as Charles is on philosophical topics, and as brilliant as he is as a teacher of those topics, Charles is above all to my mind, a patriot. He certainly does his share of writing and speaking in academic outlets, but he's much more interested in bringing philosophical insight to bear on the practical questions of the American regime because he is a partisan of that regime."

Kesler spoke on "Editing the Declaration," discussing reactions and changes to the initial draft of the Declaration of Independence.

"Aristotle, in book five of the Ethics defines political right as partly natural and partly conventional or legal, suggesting apparently that in politics natural right and conventional right come wrapped up together in concrete political situations," Kesler said.

Kesler said the Declaration's structure is harmonious with this idea, moving from the natural rights of man to the right of the people to establish a new form of government they believe will secure those rights.

"All of these judgments of what is required by the circumstances of political action are seen in the Declaration as complements or completions of natural rights in the sense that Aristotle

recognizes as political,” Kesler said. “Similarly, our constitution includes that combination of natural justice and of customary or civil embodiments of it to buttress it and enforce it, which helped together again to make what might be called political right.”

Charles R. Kesler is the Dengler-Dykema Distinguished Professor of Government at Claremont McKenna College, a senior fellow of the Claremont Institute, and the editor of the Claremont Review of Books. He has written several books, including, most recently, “Crisis of the Two Constitutions: The Rise, Decline, and Recovery of American Greatness.”

The conference was based on the new book “Leisure with Dignity,” edited by Michael Anton and Glenn Ellmers, which compiles a variety of essays by Kesler’s former students as a tribute to him. Panels on Friday and Saturday discussed each of these essays. Among Kesler’s former students featured in the book are several Hillsdale College faculty members: Pestritto; Matthew Spalding, vice president of Washington operations; Timothy Caspar, lecturer of politics; and Bradley C.S. Watson, associate professor of government.

For photos from Kesler’s 2021 Center for Constructive Alternatives lecture at Hillsdale, click [here](#). For photos of Hillsdale faculty whom Kesler taught, click [here](#). For photos of the Graduate School of Statesmanship, click [here](#). For photos of Hillsdale College, click [here](#).

For a high-resolution copy of the Hillsdale College clocktower logo, click [here](#).

About Hillsdale College

Hillsdale College is an independent, nonsectarian, Christian liberal arts college located in southern Michigan. Founded in 1844, the College has built a national reputation through its classical liberal arts core curriculum and its principled refusal to accept federal or state taxpayer subsidies, even indirectly in the form of student grants or loans. It also conducts an outreach effort promoting civil and religious liberty, including a free monthly speech digest, Imprimis, with a circulation of more than 6.6 million. For more information, visit hillsdale.edu.

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