



HILLSDALE COLLEGE

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Hillsdale College Holds 173rd Annual Commencement Ceremony Featuring Address by Victor Davis Hanson

The annual ceremony included conferral of degrees, recognition of academic honors, and announcement of the professor of the year.

HILLSDALE, Mich. — Hillsdale College held its 173rd Commencement Ceremony on Saturday, May 10. The College conferred undergraduate, graduate, and honorary degrees. Victor Davis Hanson, Wayne and Marcia Buske Distinguished Fellow in History, delivered the Commencement address.

First, Hanson briefly commented on Hillsdale's importance in today's public discourse on federal funding in higher education.

“Has anyone noticed how the eyes of the nation, suddenly in the last year, have turned to Hillsdale? This recent interest even surpasses the past considerable attention that the College had always garnered. Take, for example, Harvard University. It wishes to be free of Washington, at least as the federal government is defined as the present administration. And yet, in its confusion, Harvard still wants \$9 billion in federal monies. In answer, the public then directs Harvard to consult Hillsdale, whose model of disavowal of federal funds is longstanding. But yet, under examination, it is far more principled. You see, Hillsdale's declination of government money does not hinge on the particular administration in power, Republican or Democrat. Instead, its creed is that the federal government should not dictate to private, autonomous colleges that do not seek its federal subsidies,” Hanson said. “Hillsdale College has become the nation's 21st-century example of higher education: what it should have been and yet what we can hope it might be.”

Then, he addressed the graduating class, encouraging them to remember the importance of what they have learned at Hillsdale, both for the present and the future.

“You, the graduating class, have been instructed in, absorbed fully, and will pass on thus a code of honorable conduct that has become a natural, not a forced, part of who you are and will remain with you in the long road ahead. Hillsdale has taught you not to worry if you are not one with a current majority of youth because you are certainly one with most of the past and future generations, and your confidence in your code of ethical comportment and personal standards will help guide future cohorts and the nation itself to come. Because your values are real, they are permanent, and they are ancient, you will not be won over by others who justify their lapses of behavior by situational ethics,” Hanson said.

Victor Davis Hanson is the Wayne and Marcia Buske Distinguished Fellow in History at Hillsdale College, a senior fellow at the Hoover Institution, a professor of classics emeritus at California State University, Fresno, and a nationally syndicated columnist for Tribune Media Services. He has written for several publications, including The Wall Street Journal, the Claremont Review of Books, The New Criterion, and the Daily Telegraph. A recipient of the National Humanities Medal and the Bradley Prize, he is the author of numerous books, including “A War Like No Other: How the Athenians and Spartans Fought the Peloponnesian War,” “The Second World Wars: How the First Global Conflict Was Fought and Won,” “The Case for Trump,” and “The End of Everything: How Wars Descend into Annihilation.”

“This is a unique event. All of us here in our different ranks have done something together. We each played a part. The nexus for this particular unique something is these seniors, who sit here in front of me to my left. They will never work together again as they have — in close proximity, with everybody here to help them. We are happy today. Of course we lose something too, and we feel the loss of it. But then there is not a loss, either, because the something we are here for today is not just about the past, and it is not just about the future,” said Hillsdale College President Larry P. Arnn. “There is something that unites completion and beginning, something that unites the past and the present and future. And that is the something that we are here to do. The philosopher says that you cannot have knowledge of anything that does not last forever. It is those things we need to know. That’s what we have come together to do.”

Dr. Arnn recognized the 2025 professor of the year, Christopher Matsos, chairman and associate professor of theatre. He also recognized the outstanding seniors and top academic graduates from the class of 2025, as well as Professor of Chemistry Mark Nussbaum, who is retiring from Hillsdale College after 24 years of service.

Hillsdale College has held its Commencement ceremony every year since 1860.

For photos from Commencement, click [here](#). For a video recording of Commencement, 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 6.8 million. For more information, visit hillsdale.edu.

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