



HILLSDALE COLLEGE

PURSUING TRUTH · DEFENDING LIBERTY SINCE 1844

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 16, 2025

CONTACT:

Emily Stack Davis

517-803-3745

PR@hillsdale.edu

Hillsdale College Presents 2025 Judith Finn Memorial Award to Graduate Student Madelaine Christensen

Hillsdale presents the award each year to an outstanding master's graduate.

HILLSDALE, Mich. — Hillsdale College presented the 2025 Judith Finn Memorial Award to Madelaine Christensen of Vicksburg, Michigan, on May 5, 2025. The award is presented each year to a graduating master's student. Christensen received her master's degree in politics this year from Hillsdale's Van Andel Graduate School of Statesmanship.

"Maddie is a diligent student and an excellent writer," said Ronald J. Pestritto, dean of the graduate school and professor of politics. "Her passion to understand political philosophy and to see American society restored will serve her well in law school and beyond."

The Judith Finn Memorial Award is presented each spring to a Hillsdale College master's graduate based on his or her thesis or comprehensive exam and overall graduate program performance. The winner is selected by a committee of faculty members from the Graduate School of Statesmanship.

"I am grateful for this honor and for my time at the Van Andel Graduate School of Statesmanship," Christensen said. "Hillsdale allowed me to be immersed in core texts and original documents as I sought to understand both political philosophy and politics in America. It has been a dream come true."

The Judith Finn Memorial Award was established by her husband Michael Finn and her family following her passing in 2015. It honors her legacy of civic engagement and scholarly work. Finn earned a master's degree in political science from Michigan State University but — as noted by her family — "would have much preferred a degree from Hillsdale College had its graduate school been established 50 years earlier."

Christenson received her B.A. in communications from Brigham Young University in 2021 and plans to attend law school. Her academic interests include women and the American family, education, and Thomas Jefferson. Her master's thesis was titled "Reclaiming Rousseau: Revisiting the Ideal Woman in 'Emile.'"

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

About the Van Andel Graduate School of Statesmanship

The Van Andel Graduate School of Statesmanship was founded in 2010 "to educate students in the language of American constitutionalism and to place its graduates in positions of public service in politics, in journalism, in the Academy, and elsewhere." Its courses of study, which culminate in either a Master of Arts or a Doctor of Philosophy in Politics, are centered around the core texts from the Western and American traditions of political thought — what Thomas Jefferson called the "elementary books of public right." All admitted students received a full-tuition scholarship and admitted Ph.D. students receive an additional living stipend. For more information, gradschool.hillsdale.edu.

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.

###