



HILLSDALE COLLEGE

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CONTACT:

Emily Stack Davis

517-803-3745

PR@hillsdale.edu

Hillsdale College Mock Trial Student Wins Second Place in Trial by Combat

Patrick McDonald '26 represented Hillsdale in the one-on-one collegiate mock trial championship.

HILLSDALE, Mich. — Hillsdale College mock trial student Patrick McDonald '26 took second place in the eighth annual Trial by Combat. Abigail Davis '25 assisted McDonald as his attorney second chair. The one-on-one collegiate mock trial national championship was held in Philadelphia from June 20-22. It was co-hosted by Drexel University's Thomas R. Kline School of Law and UCLA School of Law.

"Only the top 16 mock trial students in the nation make it to this event, and it's a very tough competition," said Professor of Rhetoric Kirstin Kiledal.

McDonald and Davis are the first students to represent Hillsdale at Trial by Combat.

During the four preliminary trials, McDonald and the other competitors each got to compete as both attorney and witness for both plaintiff and defense. The top four students competed as attorneys in the semifinals, and the finalists competed as attorneys in the championship trial.

"Students normally have months to prepare a case, but Patrick and Abby had only 24 hours to prepare both a plaintiff and defense theory of the case," said Director of Mock Trial Jonathan Church. "During the semifinal round, Patrick had to argue an additional pre-trial motion. He then had to direct and cross-examine new witnesses added for the championship final round."

Rory Banfalvi of the University of Toronto won the championship by a 4-3 judge decision. McDonald came in second by one point on one judge's ballot.

The competition is limited to 16 competitors nationwide each year, recognizing top individual competitors rather than teams.

During the 2024-2025 season, Hillsdale College Mock Trial won two tournaments and placed at seven others. Program members earned 28 outstanding attorney and outstanding witness awards, including a record six all-national honors. Director of Mock Trial Jonathan Church and Assistant Mock Trial Coach Lindsey Church won the W. Ward Reynoldson Award from the American Mock Trial Association, awarded to the coaches of the teams that appeared in the 2024 National Championship Final Round.

For headshots of Davis and McDonald, 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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