



HILLSDALE COLLEGE

PURSuing TRUTH · DEFENDING LIBERTY SINCE 1844

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Hillsdale Alumna and Visiting Fellow Elizabeth Spalding Receives Officer's Cross of the Order of Merit of Hungary

The award recognizes her scholarship and educational initiatives about Hungary's struggle against communism.

HILLSDALE, Mich. — Elizabeth Spalding, a 1988 Hillsdale College alumna and visiting fellow at Hillsdale's Van Andel Graduate School of Government in Washington, D.C., received the Officer's Cross of the Order of Merit of Hungary on Oct. 22 at the Hungarian Embassy in Washington, D.C. The award, which is one of the country's highest honors, recognizes Spalding's work educating people about Hungary's struggle against communism.

The award, bestowed by President of Hungary Tamás Sulyok, was read by Hungarian Ambassador to the United States Szabolcs Takács and presented by the Hungarian Foreign Minister Peter Szijjarto at the embassy's commemoration of the anniversary of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution. Also in attendance was Christopher Landau, deputy secretary of state of the United States.

"Today's award is a formal expression of Hungary's deep gratitude," Takács said. "Mr. Tamás Sulyok, president of Hungary, has bestowed upon Ms. Elizabeth Edwards Spalding the Officer's Cross of the Order of Merit of Hungary in recognition of her work in presenting the 1956 Revolution and Freedom Fight, as well as Hungary's and the Hungarian nation's struggle against communism, at both educational and scholarly levels, and for her efforts in strengthening a positive image of Hungary."

In her acceptance speech, Spalding told the story of Peter Schramm, whom she credited — along with President Ronald Reagan, Pope John Paul II, and Hungarian Cardinal Joseph Mindszenty

— with advancing her education in “pursuing truth, defending freedom, and rejecting all forms of tyranny.”

“Like some 200,000 others, Peter and his family escaped Hungary after the 1956 Revolution,” Spalding said. “They loved their country, but they hated the injustice of the communist regime more. An almost 10-year-old Peter asked his dad, ‘Why America?’ His father’s response: ‘Because, Son, we were born Americans, but in the wrong place.’ This insight about truth, justice, and freedom underscores what we stand together for — in America and Hungary, in the West, in Christendom. On this special day, I express my deep gratitude for authentic freedom and the friendship between the American and Hungarian peoples. From the bottom of my heart, thank you again for this high honor.”

Elizabeth Edwards Spalding is a visiting fellow at Hillsdale College’s Van Andel Graduate School of Government in Washington, D.C., a senior fellow at the Pepperdine University School of Public Policy, and the chairman of the Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation, where she serves as the founding director of the Victims of Communism Museum. She is the author of “The First Cold Warrior: Harry Truman, Containment, and the Remaking of Liberal Internationalism” and the co-author of “A Brief History of the Cold War.” An educator and frequent public speaker, she received her B.A. in politics from Hillsdale College in 1988 and her M.A. and Ph.D. in international politics and political theory from the University of Virginia. In 2024, she received Hillsdale’s Elizebeth Smith Friedman Award for Freedom, which honors alumni who have promoted freedom in their careers.

For a photo from the ceremony, click [here](#). For a headshot of Spalding, click [here](#). For photos of Hillsdale in D.C., click [here](#). For a high-resolution copy of the Hillsdale College clocktower logo, click [here](#).

About Hillsdale in D.C.

Hillsdale College’s campus in Washington, D.C., extends the College’s educational mission to the nation’s capital by teaching and promoting the principles and practice of American constitutionalism. As the home of the Washington-Hillsdale Internship Program, the James Madison Fellowship Program, the Van Andel Graduate School of Government, and a variety of lectures and events open to policymakers and the public, Hillsdale in D.C. seeks to inspire and form students, citizens, practitioners, and statesmen who will restore America’s principles and revive self-government in the political life of the nation. For more information, visit dc.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 seven million. For more information, visit hillsdale.edu.

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