



HILLSDALE COLLEGE

PURSUING TRUTH • DEFENDING LIBERTY SINCE 1844

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 20, 2026

CONTACT:

Emily Stack Davis

517-803-3745

PR@hillsdale.edu

Follow [@HillsdalePR](https://twitter.com/HillsdalePR)

Hillsdale College Celebrates Spring Convocation

Professor of History Wilfred McClay gave a speech titled 'On Turning 250,' and Michael Clark of the Economics Department received the Daugherty Award for Teaching Excellence.

HILLSDALE, Mich. — Hillsdale College hosted its annual Spring Convocation in Christ Chapel on April 9. The traditional academic ceremony included remarks by Hillsdale College President Larry P. Arnn, a speech by Professor of History Wilfred McClay, and recognitions of academic and teaching excellence.

McClay, professor of history at Hillsdale College and author of “Land of Hope: An Invitation to the Great American Story,” gave an address titled, “On Turning 250.” He argued that history shapes the souls of students, influencing the kind of citizens they become.

“I sometimes ask some of my fellow historians who write in highly critical ways about the American past whether they ever worry that a relentless emphasis on the negative aspects of their country’s history could ultimately be demoralizing to the young,” McClay said. “The answer I hear is nearly always the same: ‘That’s not my job.’ But it’s an inadequate answer and I think a self-serving answer. There’s a responsibility here that can’t be evaded. A republican form of government cannot exist for long, let alone thrive, if it does not elicit and reinforce the loyalty and competence and love of its citizenry.”

McClay said that the upcoming 250th anniversary of American Independence is an opportunity to reflect on our history and on the kind of people we are educating our children to become.

“Do we understand that it will not do for us to continue as a nation to continue down the disastrous educational road we’ve been traveling?” McClay asked. “I hope so. And this is what the 250th can provide us with — an opportunity to reach back in time and renew ourselves by

remembering who we are: not a people held together by coercion and by a bitter fever of victimization, but a people held together by our pursuit of a great ideal of human dignity and faith in the capacity of citizens to rule themselves.”

Dr. Arnn presented the Spring 2026 Emily Daugherty Award for Teaching Excellence to Michael Clark, associate professor of economics. Clark, a 2004 graduate of Hillsdale College, earned his M.A. and Ph.D. in philosophy from George Mason University. He has taught at Hillsdale College since 2011.

Hillsdale College Provost Christopher VanOrman announced fall 2025 academic performance statistics and awards. Kappa Kappa Gamma won the Sorority Scholarship Cup with a GPA of 3.608, and Sigma Chi won the Fraternity Scholarship Cup with a GPA of 3.389. The all-women’s GPA was 3.532, and the all-men’s GPA was 3.417. The all-school GPA was 3.476.

The top ten seniors were Ashley DeVore, Noah Larrick, Patrick McDonald, Hugh Macaulay, Anna MacPhee, Jacob Meyer, Ashley Poole, Erik Teder, Andrew VanDevere, and Stephen Zhu.

Graduates of Hillsdale’s Diana Davis Spencer Graduate School of Classical Education attended the ceremony, as did 50- and 60-year alumni.

For photos from Convocation, 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 7.5 million. For more information, visit hillsdale.edu.

###