



HILLSDALE COLLEGE

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CONTACT:

Emily Stack Davis

517-803-3745

PR@hillsdale.edu

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Hillsdale College Graduates Commissioned as Marine Corps Officers

Three graduates from the class of 2026 and who completed the Marines Platoon Leader Class received their commissions the morning of Commencement.

HILLSDALE, Mich. — Three Hillsdale College graduates from the class of 2026 — Thomas Smith, Jihye Kim, and Cameron Frye — received commissions today as second lieutenants in the United States Marine Corps. A commissioning ceremony took place outdoors at the Civil War Soldiers' Monument on campus the morning of Commencement on May 9.

Peter Jennings, associate professor of leadership studies, gave an address at the ceremony, explaining the meaning of the commission and the oath.

“The moment you swear the oath, you cross a threshold,” Jennings said. “You enter the office — the moral space — of a Marine officer. At that moment, your life is radically reoriented. You put off the freedoms of the citizen, and you put on the duties of an officer. From that moment, duty is the first loyalty of your life, above all other loyalties, except to God.”

Thomas Wayne Joseph Smith of Hillsdale, Michigan, graduated with a major in philosophy. He spent a semester in D.C. through the Washington-Hillsdale Internship Program, studying at Hillsdale's D.C. campus and interning for Speaker of the House Mike Johnson. While at Hillsdale, he participated in the Hudson Institute's Political Studies Summer Fellowship and Hillsdale's Student Leadership Workshop. He also played club soccer, rugby, and lacrosse.

Jihye Kim of Koutiala, Mali, graduated with a major in politics and minors in French and military leadership. She served as co-leader of the evangelism team for Equip Ministries, president of the Liberty Battalion club for military officers, and vice president of the International Club. She volunteered with two Hillsdale College GOAL programs: SOAR

mentorship and Bread of Life. She also had several on-campus jobs and spent a summer studying abroad in France.

Cameron Hayward Frye of Atlanta, Indiana, graduated with a major in politics. On campus, he served as a resident assistant and head resident assistant in Galloway Hall. He also served as vice-president of the Roundnet Club. Frye received his commission in a private ceremony the same morning, with his grandfather administering the oath to him.

Smith, Kim, and Frye received their commissions through participation in the Marine Corps' Platoon Leaders Class. Students in the program complete Officer Candidates School, a 10 to 12-week training program at Quantico, Virginia, over one or two summers as undergraduates. Successful completion of OCS gives them the opportunity to commission as second lieutenants in the Marine Corps upon college graduation.

For more information about the Platoon Leaders Class, click [here](#). For photos from the commissioning ceremony, click [here](#). Photos from other Commencement weekend events will be uploaded [here](#). To livestream the Commencement ceremony, 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.

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