



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Aug. 27, 2026

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Hillsdale College Blake Center Sponsors Somers America250 Celebration

The Center also hosted an open house featuring the College's American Art Collection.

HILLSDALE, Mich. — Hillsdale College's Blake Center for Faith and Freedom in Somers, Connecticut, was one of the sponsors of the town's America250 celebration on Aug. 15. During the celebration, the Center hosted an open house at its main building, where the College's American Art Collection was on display for public viewing.

"As we celebrate 250 years of American independence, the Blake Center was glad to offer the community a unique way to engage with the American founding," said Alan Crippen, executive director and chaplain of the Blake Center. "The portraits in this collection represent many of the great men who won and kept the freedom we celebrate."

Hillsdale's American Art Collection features several sculptures and many portraits of America's founders, including original paintings from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as well as master copies and contemporary works.

The collection includes George Henry Story's final portrait of Abraham Lincoln, the most valuable Lincoln portrait ever sold. Story created a series of Lincoln paintings during World War I from life sketches he had made years earlier in the Oval Office. His Lincoln paintings are displayed in the Oval Office, the Smithsonian Institution, and the Metropolitan Museum. This is the only one in a private collection.

The collection is on permanent display in the Center's main building, which is an exterior replica of Monticello, Thomas Jefferson's neo-classical Virginia home.

The community celebration also included concerts and performances, family and children's activities, a reading of the Declaration of Independence, a drone show, and more.

As part of its ongoing celebration of America's semiquincentennial, the Blake Center is also hosting a lecture series throughout the year titled "America at 250." The series highlights influential figures whose contributions to early American culture helped define what it means to be an American.

For more information about the American Art Collection, click [here](#). For more information about the "America at 250" lecture series, click [here](#). For photos of Hillsdale College, click [here](#). For a high-resolution copy of the Hillsdale College clocktower logo, click [here](#).

About the Blake Center for Faith and Freedom

Philanthropists Prestley and Helen Blake donated the buildings and acreage of their estate in Somers, Connecticut, to Hillsdale College in 2019. The Blake Center for Faith and Freedom is a religious institution that includes an exterior replica of Monticello, Thomas Jefferson's renowned neo-classical home in Virginia. The College utilizes the property to host events that further its mission, focusing on the foundational principles of faith and freedom. To this end, most events held at the Blake Center have clear religious themes, focusing on topics relating to Christianity, man's relationship to God, and faith generally. For more information, visit blakecenter.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 7.5 million. For more information, visit hillsdale.edu.

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