



Hillsdale Graduate School Faculty Publish on Politics

Van Andel Graduate School Faculty Release Three New Books

By Maureen Collins

On Thursday, September 28, Hillsdale College's Van Andel Graduate School of Statesmanship celebrated the release of three books by faculty authors with a reception in the Heritage Room of the Mossey Library. The books discussed were *Justice Stephen Field's Cooperative Constitution of Liberty* by assistant professor of politics Adam Carrington, *Benjamin Franklin: Natural Right and the Art of Virtue* by assistant professor of politics Kevin Slack, and *The Political Theory of the Founding* by professor of politics Thomas West.

Ronald J. Pestritto, dean of the graduate school and professor of politics, emphasized in his opening remarks that although Hillsdale's faculty focuses primarily on teaching, it is nevertheless vital for them to maintain and advance their research. "This past year, the school had experienced an embarrassment of riches in faculty-published works," he said.

After opening remarks, three doctoral students presented on each book. Jonathan Ashbach said Dr. Carrington's book described Justice Stephen Field as a man who did not impose personal economic theory through his opinions. Instead, Field's thought centered on the political principles that undergird the American system of government, said Ashbach.

Next, Colin Brown presented on Dr. Slack's book on Benjamin Franklin. Interestingly, Slack's new book explores why Benjamin Franklin should be considered first and foremost as a philosopher and political theorist whose theory centered on virtue and human nature. "As a philosopher, Franklin contended that virtue is natural to mankind, good for its own sake, and necessary if man is to act well and attain happiness," said Brown.

Finally, Bruno Cortes reviewed Dr. West's book, *The Political Theory of the American Founding*. Cortes remarked that West's book departs from the dominant scholarship "by arguing that the founding generation had a common conception of justice which was—and remains—of greater importance to understanding the founding than the opinion of any individual founder."

All three books are now available for purchase. Photos of the reception and authors are [available here](#).

About Hillsdale College

Hillsdale College, founded in 1844, 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 3.7 million. More information at hillsdale.edu.

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