



HILLSDALE COLLEGE

PURSING TRUTH • DEFENDING LIBERTY SINCE 1844

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 31, 2020

CONTACT: Emily Stack Davis

517-803-3745

PR@hillsdale.edu

Hillsdale College Holds 168th Annual Commencement Ceremony

Professor emeritus urges graduates to rise to challenge of the times

Hillsdale, Mich. —Hillsdale College celebrated its 168th Commencement on July 18 at Frank “Muddy” Waters Stadium, thus continuing its unbroken tradition of holding Commencement annually. The ceremony, which is normally held on the campus East Lawn or in the Margot V. Biermann Athletic Center, was moved to the stadium to allow for social distancing between graduates and guests due to the COVID-19 epidemic.

To host Commencement safely and lawfully, Hillsdale College consulted with legal and epidemiological experts, local law enforcement and health officials, and state government officials.

Thomas Conner, professor emeritus of history who recently retired after 37 years of teaching at Hillsdale College, gave the Commencement address. In citing the many challenges the graduates face in today’s world, Conner referenced the response of past generations of Hillsdale College graduates who likewise faced turbulent and threatening times.

“It is common knowledge around here how Hillsdale graduates during the most famous of our national crises rose to the challenges of their times, and it was no accident that they did. You must be no different,” said Conner. “I challenge the graduates, and all of us here, to bring as much as we possibly can of humanity, society, decency, and dutifulness to past, present, and future, into our households, our places of work, and our communities.”

The Class of 2020 included 341 undergraduate students and 16 graduate students. Hillsdale College President Larry P. Arnn also recognized three recently retired faculty members: Conner, Lucy Moye of the History Department, and Marie-Claire Morellec of the French Department. Arnn also announced the 2020 Professor of the Year, Associate Professor of English Benedict Whalen.

Arnn commended the graduates for their perseverance and good cheer in spite of the disruption of their senior year by the pandemic. “These seniors are going to be remembered as one of our greatest classes in our very long and distinguished history,” said Arnn. “[College] is valuable and it requires intensity and effort and the overcoming of obstacles to complete it. And obstacles are always in the way, every day. These people responded to that beautifully. And they’re here today. It’s a symbol of the strength of the association that a good college can achieve.”

About Hillsdale College

Hillsdale College is an independent 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 5.4 million. For more information, visit hillsdale.edu.

###