



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 31, 2020

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Hillsdale College Recognizes Top Academic Graduates, Outstanding Seniors

Hillsdale, Mich. — As a part of its 168th Commencement in-person activities, Hillsdale College recognized the top five academic graduates of the Class of 2020, as well as the Outstanding Senior Man and Woman, at a special dinner and program on Saturday, July 18. The Outstanding Senior Man and Woman are nominated by the senior class and voted on by the faculty.

The top five graduates are as follows:

- **Sarah Becker** of Inver Grove Heights, Minnesota, was named Outstanding Senior Woman and is co-valedictorian of her class. She majored in biochemistry and philosophy with a minor in biology. While a student, Sarah served in leadership positions in the GOAL Community Health Program, the Pre-Professional Society, the Phi Sigma Tau philosophy honorary, the Iota Sigma Pi chemistry honorary, and the Phi Kappa Phi interdisciplinary honorary. She also won a Marsden Prize for Outstanding Research in Chemistry, served as a research intern at the MD Anderson Cancer Center, and organized the Modern Identity Crisis bioethics conference at Hillsdale College. Sarah plans to attend the Oakland University William Beaumont School of Medicine in Michigan.
- **Olivia Mulley** of Pennsylvania Furnace, Pennsylvania, majored in mathematics and received the 2019-2020 Taylor Math Prize (one of only three recipients). She was active in the Kappa Mu Epsilon mathematics honorary, the Hillsdale Hepcats Swing Club, the Tower Players, the Tower Dancers, the Catholic Society, and the Phi Kappa Phi interdisciplinary honorary. Olivia took private voice, piano, and violin lessons, sang in the choir at a local church, and won first place in master copies at a student art show. She also served as a teaching assistant for the Hillsdale College summer mathematics and science camp for high school students. Olivia plans to study abroad in Oxford this fall and eventually teach math or work in the security, intelligence, or defense fields.
- Co-valedictorian **Sidney San Juan** of Berwyn, Illinois, earned a major in psychology and completed a minor in early childhood education. While on campus, she played on the softball team and participated in the Psi Chi psychology honorary and Athletes InterVarsity. In addition, she assisted at the Mary Proctor Randall Preschool and worked as a laboratory assistant for the Psychology Department. Starting this fall, Sidney plans to teach kindergarten, physical education, and fifth and sixth grade literature and composition at Cedar Classical Academy in Okemos, Michigan.
- **Hannah Stevenson** of Stow, Massachusetts, completed a triple major in history, Latin, and Greek. She was active on campus in the Collegiate Scholars Program, the Humane Society Project, the Phi Kappa Phi interdisciplinary honorary, the Phi Alpha Theta history honorary, the Eta Sigma Phi classical studies honorary, and the Kappa Mu Epsilon mathematics honorary. Hannah also served as a peer tutor, held an

office in the equestrian club, and assisted with childcare at a local church. Hannah will attend graduate school to pursue a doctorate in early modern history.

- Salutatorian **Gabriella VanAken** of Elmhurst, Illinois, pursued a biochemistry major with a Spanish minor. Her campus activities included participating in the Phi Kappa Phi interdisciplinary honorary, the Kappa Kappa Gamma sorority, the American Chemical Society, the Iota Sigma Pi chemistry honorary, and the Rotaract Club (a collegiate extension of the Rotary Club). She also volunteered with the Domestic Harmony Project; played on a flag football team; and served as a cheerleader, a teaching assistant, and a student ambassador. Gabriella will attend the University of Michigan Medical School.

Isaac Johnson, originally from Haslett, Michigan, was named Outstanding Senior Man. An English major and a member of the Collegiate Scholars Program, Isaac served as an Admissions Student Ambassador, student director of the Writing Center, and an assistant to the English Department and the President's Office. He belonged to Eta Sigma Phi classical studies honorary, Phi Alpha Theta history honorary, and Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia music fraternity, and he served as an editor of the *Tower Light* literary journal. Earlier this spring, Isaac began working at Hillsdale College as the Project Manager for Online Learning.

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.

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