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Hillsdale College President Addresses State of American Education at Intercollegiate Studies Institute Gala

Hillsdale, Mich. — Hillsdale College President Larry P. Arnn gave the keynote address on the founders and the state of education in America at the 2021 Intercollegiate Studies Institute (ISI) Gala, touted as “an unforgettable evening with three outstanding leaders.” The [15th annual Gala](#) for Western Civilization took place at the Mayflower Hotel in Washington, D.C., on Sept. 16.

“What we’re doing now [in education across the nation] is taking the effort out of life,” said Dr. Arnn. “In order to remove the problem that ‘Plato’s Republic’ is difficult, we abandon it or corrupt it or condemn it, and that is dehumanizing ... Education is not like making something. It is like helping something to grow. By forgetting that, we forget what human beings are, and that’s where our freedom will die.”

Arnn discussed the difficulty of living well and how greatness can only be measured against a standard of perfection that humans will never reach but should still serve to inspire.

“That is the specific thing that is being excluded from education now — and excluded by force of law,” he said. He argued, however, that those in power today underestimate the mighty force of beauty and its ability to move a person to tears or even to the point of sacrificing his or her life. “That is why all will be well,” he said.

Johnny Burtka, president and CEO of ISI, introduced Dr. Arnn, saying he could think of no better person to address the state of education in America.

“It’s important to teach students how to think, but it’s even more important that those principles make it from their heads all the way down to their hearts,” said Burtka. “It’s hard when you’re 22 years old to really understand what that means in practice, but it is possible if you have a teacher like Dr. Arnn, who is truly a statesman, a man who exhibits greatness of soul and who actually embodies the virtues that he teaches on a daily basis.”

Diana Davis Spencer, executive chairman of the Diana Davis Spencer Foundation, and Daniel J. Mahoney, professor emeritus at Assumption University and senior fellow at the RealClear Foundation, also spoke at the gala and received ISI awards.

The Intercollegiate Studies Institute's mission is to supply classical education to instruct young college students who receive progressive teaching at today's universities. For more information, go to [ISI's website](#).

Dr. Arnn's speech can be rewatched [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 5.8 million. For more information, visit hillsdale.edu.

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