



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Nov. 16, 2021

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Visiting Writers Program Hosts Poet Dana Gioia

HILLSDALE, Mich. — Since its establishment in the late 1980s by Daniel Sundahl, former professor of English at Hillsdale College, the Visiting Writers Program has brought nationally-renowned novelists, professors, and poets to campus. Poet Dana Gioia is the most recent participant in the program and spoke in Plaster Auditorium on Nov. 10.

“Gioia shows us that the arts can be bipartisan and that conservatives can play an important role in transforming culture, said Dutton Kearney, associate professor of English and the head of the Visiting Writers Program. “If you’ve ever been a part of Poetry Out Loud or The Big Read, you should thank Gioia — he developed those programs.”

Gioia recited his poems from memory, then opened it up to Q&A before a book-signing session in the Searle Center lobby.

“He is a consummate professional, with a voice that could have easily made him a radio or television announcer. Everyone at the poetry reading was impressed,” said Kearney. “Some people in the audience were moved to tears, and some to laughter, but all were rapt.”

The Visiting Writers Program brings the past into a dynamic conversation with the present by exposing students to writers both steeped in the classic literary tradition and actively contributing to the contemporary conversation.

Gioia is an internationally acclaimed poet and writer. Former California poet laureate and chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts, he received a B.A. and M.B.A. from Stanford and an M.A. from Harvard in comparative literature. For 15 years he worked as a businessman before becoming a full-time writer at age 41.

Gioia has published five full-length collections of verse, most recently “99 Poems: New & Selected” (2016), which won the Poets’ Prize as the best new book of the year. His third collection, “Interrogations at Noon” (2001), was awarded the American Book Award. Gioia is best known as a central figure in the revival of rhyme, meter, and narrative in contemporary poetry.

View a headshot of Gioia [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 six million. For more information, visit hillsdale.edu.

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