*Please note that these building numbers do not correspond with emergency services.*
History & Mission

Hillsdale College was founded as Michigan Central College in Spring Arbor, Michigan, in 1844. Nine years later it moved to Hillsdale and assumed its current name. As stated in its Articles of Association, the College undertakes its work “grateful to God for the inestimable blessings resulting from the prevalence of civil and religious liberty and intelligent piety in the land, and believing that the diffusion of sound learning is essential to the perpetuity of these blessings.”

Though established by Freewill Baptists, Hillsdale has been officially non-denominational since its inception. It was the first American college to prohibit in its charter any discrimination based on race, religion, or sex, and became an early force for the abolition of slavery. It was also the only second college in the nation to grant four-year liberal arts degrees to women.

Professor and preacher Ransom Dunn, who would serve Hillsdale College for half a century, raised money to construct the new hilltop campus in the early 1850s by riding 6,000 miles on horseback on the Wisconsin and Minnesota frontier. It was largely through Dunn’s efforts that Hillsdale would survive while over 80 percent of colleges founded before the Civil War would not.

A higher percentage of Hillsdale students enlisted during the Civil War than from any other western college. Of the more than 400 who fought, a higher percentage of Hillsdale students enlisted during the Civil War than from any other western college. Of the more than 400 who fought, more than 400 fought for the Union, three won the Congressional Medal of Honor, three became generals, and many more served as regimental commanders. Sixty gave their lives. Because of the College’s anti-slavery reputation and its role in founding the new Republican party, (College President Edmund Farwell was a leader at the first convention), many notable speakers visited its campus during the Civil War era, including Frederick Douglass and Edward Everett, who preceded Lincoln at Gettysburg.

Hillside’s modern rise to prominence occurred in the 1970s. On the campus grounds, the College undertakes its work “grateful to God for the inestimable blessings resulting from the prevalence of civil and religious liberty and intelligent piety in the land, and believing that the diffusion of sound learning is essential to the perpetuity of these blessings.”

Following almost a decade of litigation, the U.S. Supreme Court decided against Hillsdale in 1984. By this time, the College had announced that rather than complying with unconstitutional federal regulation, it would instead, the College would replace that aid with private contributions.

Hillside continues to carry out its original mission today, both in the classroom and nationwide, through its many outreach programs, including its monthly speech digest. A prayer written in the Bible that was placed inside the 1853 cornerstone of the original campus building reflects the College’s continuous commitment: “May the Church be strong and heaven be richer because of the life and labor of Hillside College.”

Statues of the Liberty Walk

Margaret Thatcher
1925—2013

George Washington
1732—1799
Scultped by Hillsdale College Associate Professor of Art Anthony Frudakis, this is the first statue created for the Liberty Walk. In his first annual message to Congress, Washington stated the common view of the Founders: “Knowledge is in every country the safest basis of public happiness.” Dedicated May 9, 2003.

John Adams
1735—1826
Scultped by Hillsdale College Associate Professor of Art Anthony Frudakis, this is the first statue created for the Liberty Walk. In his first annual message to Congress, Washington stated the common view of the Founders: “Knowledge is in every country the safest basis of public happiness.” Dedicated May 9, 2003.

Abraham Lincoln
1809—1865
This sculpture by Hillsdale College Associate Professor of Art Anthony Frudakis depicts a pensive Lincoln in the midst of war. Hillside men were instrumental in the founding of the Republican Party in 1854, and two Civil War veterans from Hillsdale College helped carry Lincoln’s casket to the slain president’s final resting place in Springfield, Illinois. Dedicated May 8, 2009.

Thomas Jefferson
1743—1826
Scultped by Hillsdale College Associate Professor of Art Anthony Frudakis, Jefferson is seated near the cornerstone of Central Hall, which also contains the cornerstone of the College’s first building, dedicated on July 4, 1853. Edmund Farwell, the College’s second president, gave a speech titled “The College and the Republic.” Dedicated April 16, 2009.

Civil War Monument
This statue of a Union soldier sculpted by Louis Taft was commissioned by Hillsdale’s Alpha Kappa Phi Literary Society to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the end of the Civil War. It bears the names of Hillsdale Alpha Kappa Phi students who gave their lives for their country during that conflict. Dedicated June 20, 1895.

Hillsdale Eagle
Scultped by Sandy Scott, this half-ton bronze eagle is the largest of several eagles on campus. The statue marks the beginning of the Alumni Walk, where bricks inscribed with messages from friends and alumni of the College line the path to Central Hall. Dedicated May 14, 1994.

Victory Bell
First hung in 1872, this bell replaced Hillsdale’s original bell, which melted in a devastating fire in 1869. The Octagonal Jones & Company Troy Bell Foundry of Troy, New York, which had manufactured cannons for the Union artillery in the Civil War, cast the bell from Civil War bullets. It hung in Central Hall until 1963, when the bell was removed due to the structural damage its weight had caused in the main tower.

Winston Churchill
1874—1965
Residing in the main lobby of the Greatwock Student Union, this statue was sculpted by Hillsdale alumna Heather Tritchka. ’94 Churchill stands in a mahogany standing desk given to him by his children. Dedicated January 2008.

Ronald Reagan
1911—2004
In 2011, to mark the centennial of Ronald Reagan’s birthday, Hillsdale College dedicated this statue of Reagan by Hillsdale Associate Professor of Art Anthony Frudakis. In November 1971, after serving as governor of California and before becoming the 40th President of the United States, Reagan gave a speech titled “Whatever Happened to Free Enterprise?” at Hillsdale College. Dedicated October 7, 2011.

James Madison
1751—1836
Standing in front of Delp Hall along the Alumnus Walk, this statue was sculpted by Associate Professor of Art Anthony Frudakis. Madison holds a quill and ink, a nod to his contributions in writing The Federalist Papers and U.S. Constitution. Dedicated September 22, 2020.

Frederick Douglass
1818—1895
More than 130 years after Frederick Douglass delivered the address “Popular Error and Unpopular Truth” at Hillsdale College in 1865, a statue of the famed abolitionist by Bruce Wolfe was dedicated on campus. The statue depicts Douglass as a scholar carrying a book under his arm. He is intentionally placed near the Abraham Lincoln statue and the Civil War monument. Dedicated May 12, 2017.

Socrates
C. 470—399 B.C.
Located on the main level of Mossey Library, this 40-inch bronze sculpture of the ancient Greek philosopher was sculpted by Associate Professor of Art Anthony Frudakis. Hillsdale College faculty and staff gave this statue to the library in 1995.

Statues of the Liberty Walk


Dedicated May 12, 2017.

Dedicated November 15, 1994.

Dedicated July 4, 1853.


Dedicated April 16, 2009.

Dedicated October 7, 2011.

Dedicated January 2008.
