

Hillsdale DC Semester Interns Attend Shakespeare's *King's Lear* at the Shakespeare Theatre Company

Hillsdale's Spring 2023 Washington-Hillsdale Internship Program (WHIP) class recently attended a showing of Shakespeare's *King Lear*—a tale of intrigue, upheaval, and heart-wrenching betrayal—at the Shakespeare Theatre Company's Klein Theatre in Washington, D.C.

The play follows King Lear, portrayed by Patrick Page, who sets out to divide his kingdom equally among his three daughters – two of them thankless flatterers, and one who sincerely loves him. A misunderstanding between them drives Lear mad, throws his throne into turmoil, and brings his daughters to blows.

Intentionally dwelling on art which edifies the soul is indispensable to a classically liberal education. Dr. Matthew Spalding, the Dean of the Van Andel Graduate School of Government, took students aside to discuss the show's core themes, reading between the lines to more fully appreciate why *King Lear* is not only regarded as one of Shakespeare's finest plays but his greatest political work.

While the Theatre Company's rendition adopted a modern aesthetic—fitted suits, military fatigues, sirens, and digital effects—the players did justice to the tragedy's core maxim: "Have more than thou showest, speak less than thou knowest." Preserved by the Company was Shakespeare's soul-piercing treatment of honor and fidelity as political forces which the learned statesman would do well to heed.

Meredith Kottom, a junior and George Washington fellow, especially enjoyed Patrick Page's portrayal: "He did a remarkable job! I could *feel* his agony over the state of his kingdom."

Meredith was not alone. Multiple students approached Page for autographs after the performance and will treasure this memory for years to come.