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may be glorified*

For Immediate Release

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Belmont Abbey College Names Hadley Arkes 2025 Benedict Leadership Award Recipient

Belmont, N.C. (February 10, 2025) – The Benedict Leadership Institute at Belmont Abbey College is pleased to recognize Hadley Arkes as the recipient of the 2025 Benedict Leadership Award. This award highlights the achievements of individuals whose lives reflect the heroic leadership of Saint Benedict.

Belmont Abbey College founded the Benedict Leadership Institute in 2016 to develop Catholic leaders and inspire them to transform society in light of their faith. Mr. Arkes is the eighth recipient of the Benedict Leadership Award, being recognized in part for his advocacy and preservation of children's lives and his adherence to the doctrines of Natural Rights. The award will be presented in a ceremony at Belmont Abbey College on March 13, 2025.

Hadley Arkes is a distinguished American professor, political philosopher, and constitutional scholar, known for his contributions to legal and political theory, particularly within the context of natural law, constitutionalism, and moral reasoning. His work spans several decades, significantly influencing debates in law, politics, and ethics, especially regarding the interpretation of the U.S. Constitution and the moral foundations of law. Arkes has been a leading advocate for a natural law-centered approach to legal reasoning and has played a key role in developing conservative legal thought.

Born in 1940, Arkes earned his undergraduate degree from the University of Illinois. He later earned a Ph.D. in political science from the University of Chicago, where he was a student of Leo Strauss, Herbert Storing, and Hans Morgenthau. He began teaching at Amherst College in 1966, where he developed signature courses on moral philosophy and the Constitution. Those courses would eventually give rise to two of his most well-known books, *First Things* (1986), from which the Catholic journal took its name, and *Beyond the Constitution* (1990). His most recent book, *Mere Natural Law* (2023), springs from his past decade of work at the James Wilson Institute teaching lawyers, judges, law clerks, and citizens the first principles underlying the Constitution.

Arkes is best known for his advocacy of natural law as a framework for constitutional interpretation. His ideas have shaped the conservative legal movement, particularly on issues of abortion and the sanctity of life. He remained deeply involved in efforts to overturn or limit the scope of *Roe v. Wade*. He played a significant role in creating and promoting the Born-Alive Infants Protection Act in the 2000s, a critical piece of legislation aimed at ensuring that infants born alive after a failed abortion would receive medical care and legal protection.

"Hadley Arkes embodies the principles of leadership and moral clarity that the Benedict Leadership Institute seeks to promote," says Conor Gallagher, Executive Director of the Benedict Leadership Institute. "His lifelong commitment to the protection of life and the advancement of natural rights serves as an inspiration to all who strive to lead with integrity and purpose."

A devout Roman Catholic convert from Judaism, Arkes's religious beliefs profoundly influence his academic and intellectual work. His commitment to the Catholic faith shapes much of his moral and political philosophy, particularly regarding issues like abortion, euthanasia, and the sanctity of life. He advocates for the integration of moral reasoning in public life, believing that religious and moral truths should inform the way laws are structured and interpreted.

Hadley Arkes stands as one of the most respected figures in contemporary political philosophy and constitutional law. His work, grounded in natural law principles and informed by his Catholic faith, continues to shape debates on fundamental issues such as abortion, constitutional interpretation, and the role of morality in public life.

The Benedict Leadership Award is a testament to the impact of individuals like Arkes, who dedicate their lives to the pursuit of justice and the betterment of society through their unwavering commitment to their faith. Prior recipients include Robert Luddy (2024), Nina Shea (2023), Archbishop Charles J. Chaput Benedict (2022), Justice Clarence Thomas (2020), Mr. Michael P. Warsaw (2019), Mr. Leonard A. Leo (2018), and Mr. Carl A. Anderson (2017).

Belmont Abbey College, home of the Benedict Leadership Institute, is a private Catholic liberal arts college located near Charlotte, NC. Founded in 1876 by Benedictine monks, it is recognized by the Cardinal Newman Society as one of America's top Catholic colleges.

About Belmont Abbey College: Founded in 1876, Belmont Abbey College is a private, Catholic baccalaureate and liberal arts institution. Our mission is to educate students in the liberal arts and sciences so that in all things God may be glorified. Guided by the Catholic intellectual tradition and the Benedictine spirit of prayer and learning, we welcome a diverse body of students and provide them with an education that will enable them to lead lives of integrity, to succeed professionally, to become responsible citizens, and to be a blessing to themselves and to others. Our beautiful and historic campus is conveniently located just 10 miles west of Charlotte, N.C., and is currently home to more than 1500 students. For more information, visit <https://belmontabbeycollege.edu/>.

About Benedict Leadership Institute: The Institute was founded in 2016 by Belmont Abbey College to develop Catholic leaders and inspire them to transform society while remaining true to their faith. The Institute accomplishes this goal through publications, events and through the awarding of The Benedict Leadership Award, presented annually to an outstanding Catholic leader. For more information, please visit <https://benedictleadershipinstitute.org/>.