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Hanson was a National Endowment for the Humanities fellow at the Center for Advanced Studies in the Behavioral Sciences, Stanford, California (1992–93), a visiting professor of classics at Stanford University (1991–92), the annual Wayne and Marcia Buske Distinguished Visiting Fellow in History at Hillsdale College (2004–), the Visiting Shifron Professor of Military History at the US Naval Academy (2002–3), and the William Simon Visiting Professor of Public Policy at Pepperdine University (2010).

In 1991 he was awarded an American Philological Association Excellence in Teaching Award. He received the Eric Breindel Award for Excellence in Opinion Journalism (2002), presented the Manhattan's Institute's Wriston Lecture (2004), and was awarded the National Humanities Medal (2007) and the Bradley Prize (2008).

Hanson is the author of hundreds of articles, book reviews, and newspaper editorials on Greek, agrarian, and military history and essays on contemporary culture. He has written or edited twenty-three books, the latest of which is *The Second World Wars* (Basic Books), which was released in October 2017. His other books include *The Savior Generals: How Five Great Commanders Saved Wars That Were Lost - from Ancient Greece to Iraq* (Bloomsbury 2013); *The End of Sparta* (Bloomsbury, 2011); *The Father of Us All: War and History, Ancient and Modern* (Bloomsbury, 2010); *Makers of Ancient Strategy: From the Persian Wars to the Fall of Rome* (ed.) (Princeton, 2010); *The Other Greeks* (California, 1998); *The Soul of Battle* (Free Press, 1999); *Carnage and Culture* (Doubleday, 2001); *Ripples of Battle* (Doubleday, 2003); *A War Like No Other* (Random House, 2005); *The Western Way of War* (Alfred Knopf, 1989; 2nd paperback ed., University of California Press, 2000); *The Wars of the Ancient Greeks* (Cassell, 1999; paperback ed., 2001); and *Mexifornia: A State of Becoming* (Encounter, 2003), as well as two books on family farming, *Fields without Dreams* (Free Press, 1995) and *The Land Was Everything* (Free Press, 1998). Currently, he is a syndicated columnist for Tribune Media Services and a weekly columnist for the *National Review Online*.

Hanson received a BA in classics at the University of California, Santa Cruz (1975), was a fellow at the American School of Classical Studies, Athens (1977–78), and received his PhD in classics from Stanford University (1980).