

THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

*Regents Communication*

**ACTION REQUEST**

**Subject: Report of Faculty Retirement**

**Action Requested: Adoption of Retirement Memoir**

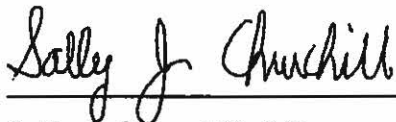
**Robert J. Willis, Ph.D.**, research professor in the Survey Research Center and research professor in the Population Studies Center within the Institute for Social Research (ISR), and professor of economics in the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, retired from active faculty status on December 31, 2018.

Professor Willis received his B.A. (1962) degree from Dartmouth College and his M.A (1965) and Ph.D. (1971) degrees from the University of Washington. Professor Willis joined the University of Michigan in 1995 and served as the director of the ISR's Health and Retirement Study (HRS) from 1995-2007. Under his leadership, the HRS grew from a single cohort to represent the full population of the US over the age of 50 and introduced many new survey instruments, including a supplemental study of cognitive functioning and dementia.

Professor Willis' research focused on labor economics and economic demography; theoretical and empirical research on economic and demographic behavior over the entire life-cycle, including research on fertility, marriage, divorce and out-of-wedlock childbearing; human capital, education and earnings; intergenerational transfers; and retirement and mortality in both developed and developing countries. Professor Willis was one of the young labor economists in the 1970s who helped to ushered in the modern era of the field with work that combined rigorous modeling and econometric sophistication and that emphasized the tight links between theory and empirical analysis that characterize labor economics. His latest work focused on the relationship between probabilistic thinking and savings and wealth accumulation as well as other aspects of the relationship between cognition and economic behavior. This research continued the commitment to innovation, rigorous measurement, and conceptual clarity that characterized Professor Willis' long career in labor economics. Professor Willis was a fellow of the Society of Labor Economists; past president of the Midwestern Economics Association and the Society of Labor Economists; and winner of the 2002 Mindel C. Sheps Award from the Population Association of America for outstanding contributions to mathematical demography or demographic methodology.

The Regents now salute this distinguished scholar by naming **Robert J. Willis, research professor emeritus and professor emeritus of economics.**

**Requested by:**



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**Sally J. Churchill, J.D.**

**Vice President and Secretary of the University**

**December 2018**