

THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Regents Communication

ACTION REQUEST

Subject: Report of Faculty Death
Action Requested: Adoption of Memorial Statement

The Regents of the University of Michigan acknowledge with profound sadness the death of **Michael Bonner, Ph.D.**, professor of Medieval Islamic history in the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts. Professor Bonner died on May 25, 2019.

Professor Bonner received his A.B. (1974) and A.M. (1976) degrees from Harvard University and his M.A. (1984) and Ph.D. (1987) degrees from Princeton University. He joined the University of Michigan faculty as an assistant professor in 1989, and was promoted to associate professor in 1995, and professor in 2006. Professor Bonner served as director of the Center for Middle Eastern and North African Studies from 1997-2000 and 2001-03. He was acting chair (2007-08) and chair (2010-14) of the Department of Near Eastern Studies. In his leadership positions, he acted with courage and integrity, pursuing a bold vision of an interconnected and collaborative academy, which continues to inspire.

Professor Bonner profoundly influenced the understanding of society, politics, and religion in the early Islamic period through his analysis of such fundamental themes as reciprocity/gift and recompense/reward as a basis of ethics and social order. He studied them in so diverse contexts as frontiers (*Aristocratic Violence and Holy War: Studies in the Jihad and the Arab-Byzantine Frontier*, 1996), poverty and charity (*Poverty and Charity in Middle Eastern Contexts*, co-editor, 2003), holy war (*Jihad in Islamic History: Doctrines and Practice*, 2008), and markets and trade, about which he was finishing a book manuscript at the time of his death. A true intellectual and polyglot, he wrote with elegance and depth in many languages. His translation of Ibn Hawqal's 10th-century *Book of the Image of the Earth* will appear posthumously. As a generous teacher and spirited interlocutor of boundless curiosity, he trained an exceptional cohort of scholars.

As we mourn the loss of our beloved colleague, we extend our heartfelt condolences to his wife, Daniela Gobetti, and his many loving relatives and friends.

Requested by:



Sally J. Churchill, J.D.
Vice President and Secretary of the University

February 2020