

THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Regents Communication

ACTION REQUEST

Subject: Report of Faculty Retirement

Action Requested: Adoption of Retirement Memoir

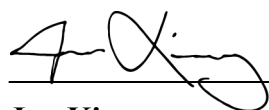
John C. Thomas, Ph.D., professor of biological sciences in the College of Arts, Sciences, and Letters, University of Michigan-Dearborn, retired from active faculty status on December 31, 2025.

In 1977, Professor Thomas received his Bachelor of Science in biology from the American University in Washington D.C. Later, he obtained his Master of Science (1980) and Ph.D. (1986) in genetics from the University of Arizona. Professor Thomas then attended Texas A&M University for a postdoctoral position with Dr. Craig Nessler, where he developed gene transfer systems in sunflowers. His second postdoctoral position was in industry at Rhône Poulenc Agrochimie (Lyon, France), working on soybean biotechnology. Upon returning to the University of Arizona, he spent a three-year postdoctoral with Dr. Hans J. Bohnert in the establishment and application of engineered insect resistant cotton crops using an insect-derived protease inhibitor. Other studies included characterization of plant gene expression in the halophyte *Mesembryanthemum crystallinum*. In 1993, he became a research assistant professor. Initiating his career as an assistant professor at the University of Michigan-Dearborn in 1994, Professor Thomas was promoted to associate professor in 1999 and professor in 2007. He received the Distinguished Teaching Award in 2006.

Professor Thomas' main research interests lie in environmental and genetic interactions during stress in higher plants. He investigates the fate and transport of heavy metals, and the many divergent genetic responses to metals in non-tolerant and genetically engineered plants. Specifically, Professor Thomas studied "phytoremediation" of soils contaminated by hazardous industrial organic compounds; nickel and copper sequestration in halophytes and glycophytes; and natural plant-derived products that signal mammalian and *Drosophila* apoptosis (cellular suicide). His research was supported by more than \$800,000 in funding from sources such as the National Science Foundation, the United States Department of Agriculture, the Environmental Protection Agency, Ford Motor Company, and the University of Michigan-Dearborn campus grants. His scholarly achievements include 62 peer-reviewed publications (many co-authored with his undergraduate and graduate student research mentees), a patent, numerous conference presentations and posters. Professor Thomas' career also includes a substantial service record to the university, having been elected twice as biology discipline chair and twice as chair of the Department of Natural Sciences.

The Regents now salute this distinguished faculty member by naming **John C. Thomas, professor emeritus of biological sciences**.

Requested by:



Jon Kinsey
Vice President and Secretary of the University

February 2026