

THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Regents Communication

ACTION REQUEST

Subject: Report of Faculty Retirement

Action Requested: Adoption of Retirement Memoir

John E. Laird, Ph.D., John L. Tishman Professor of Engineering and professor of electrical engineering and computer science in the College of Engineering, retired from active faculty status on May 31, 2022.

Professor Laird received his B.S. (1975) degree from the University of Michigan and his M.S. (1978) and Ph.D. (1983) degrees from Carnegie Mellon University. He joined the Xerox Corporation as a member of the research staff in the Intelligent Systems Laboratory at the Palo Alto Research Center in 1984. He joined the University of Michigan faculty as an assistant professor in 1986, and was promoted to associate professor in 1992, and professor in 1998.

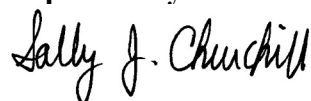
Professor Laird's research focused on creating human-level artificial intelligent entities, with an emphasis on the underlying cognitive architecture. Since 1981, his work has centered on the development and use of Soar, a general cognitive architecture. In 1998, he helped found Soar Technology, Inc., which enables the creation of human-centric autonomous software agents. Most recently, working with his students he has extended Soar to include reinforcement learning, episodic memory, semantic memory, mental imagery, and emotion-inspired processing, leading to AI systems that learn new tasks interactively from natural language instruction.

Professor Laird served as director of the Artificial Intelligence Laboratory from 1993-99 and 2005-06, and as associate chair of the Department of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science from 2000-04. In 2018, he was recognized with the Herbert A. Simon Prize for Advances in Cognitive Systems for his work on Soar. In 2020, he received the Stephen S. Attwood Award, the most prestigious award from the College of Engineering, for his teaching, research, and service activities.

Professor Laird is a fellow of the Association for the Advancement of Artificial Intelligence (AAAI), the Association for Computing Machinery (ACM), the Cognitive Science Society, and the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS).

The Regents now salute this distinguished faculty member by naming **John E. Laird, John L. Tishman Professor Emeritus of Engineering and professor emeritus of electrical engineering and computer science**.

Requested by:



Sally J. Churchill, J.D.

Vice President and Secretary of the University

May 2022