

THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Regents Communication

ACTION REQUEST

Subject: Report of Faculty Retirement

Action Requested: Adoption of Retirement Memoir

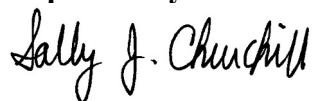
Laura J. Olsen, Ph.D., Arthur F. Thurnau Professor and professor of molecular, cellular, and developmental biology in the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, retired from active faculty status on May 31, 2022.

Professor Olsen received her B.A. (1981) degree from Doane University in Crete, NE, her M.S. (1985) degree from Iowa State University, and her Ph.D. (1989) degree from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. She was a National Institutes of Health postdoctoral fellow at the University of California-Davis (1990-93) and joined the University of Michigan faculty as an assistant professor in 1993. She was promoted to associate professor in 1999 and professor in 2011. Professor Olsen was named the Arthur F. Thurnau Professor in 2001.

Professor Olsen's research focused on the biogenesis of peroxisomes in plant cells. She was the first to clone and sequence PEX5, the primary receptor for peroxisomal protein import, in *Arabidopsis*. Her lab was known for the *in vitro* protein import assay they developed to study the molecular mechanisms of this process. Her research expanded, in collaboration with others, to define the proteome of peroxisomes in *Arabidopsis* and maize. Professor Olsen served in several leadership roles for the American Society of Plant Biologists, most notably through her work with the Women in Plant Biology committee. She was the associate chair of research (2001-05) and the associate chair of graduate studies (2009-11) for her department. When the Program in Biology was established, Professor Olsen served as the inaugural director (2011-16). She envisioned and then helped to develop the popular health, biology, and society major. Professor Olsen was an outstanding teacher, as evidenced by the many teaching and advising awards she received, including the Class of 1923 Memorial Teaching Award (1996), the Amoco Foundation Undergraduate Teaching Award (2000), and the John Dewey Award (2011). Her commitment to students extended to graduate students as well, collaborating in the establishment of the MCDB Pathways Master's program designed to improve representation in the Ph.D. community. Finally, Professor Olsen was honored to serve as the faculty director of the Michigan Research and Discovery Scholars (2017-21). She has been a dedicated mentor and advisor to a generation of undergraduate and graduate students.

The Regents now salute this distinguished educator and researcher by naming **Laura J. Olsen, Arthur F. Thurnau Professor Emerita and professor emerita of molecular, cellular, and developmental biology.**

Requested by:



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

May 2022