

THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Regents Communication

ACTION REQUEST

Subject: Report of Faculty Retirement

Action Requested: Adoption of Retirement Memoir

Elizabeth Sears, Ph.D., George H. Forsyth Jr. Collegiate Professor of the History of Art and professor of the history of art in the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, retired from active faculty status on May 31, 2024.

Professor Sears received her B.A. degree from Duke University in 1974 and her M.A. (1977) and Ph.D. (1982) degrees from Yale University. After teaching at Princeton University (1982-1989); she joined the University of Michigan faculty as an assistant professor in 1992, and was promoted to associate professor in 1995, and professor in 2001. She was named George H. Forsyth Jr. Professor of the History of Art in 2009. She served as department chair 2001-2002, 2016-2019.

A distinguished figure in the fields of medieval art and disciplinary historiography, she has published broadly and extensively, her research supported by numerous American awards, including a Guggenheim Fellowship, and grants that have taken her often and at length to England, Germany, and Italy. Her first book, *The Ages of Man: Medieval Interpretations of the Life Cycle* (1986), was awarded the John Nicholas Brown Prize from the Medieval Academy of America (MAA). The anthology *Reading Medieval Images: The Art Historian and the Object* (2002), co-edited with colleague Thelma K. Thomas, has been widely used in undergraduate teaching. Her essays in medieval art have treated issues ranging from Carolingian figured poetry to theories of sensory perception, to 12th-century author portraits, to regulations of the Parisian craft guilds. She has served the medieval field by editing the flagship journal *Gesta* (2000-2003) and sitting on the board and chairing the Publications Committee of the International Center of Medieval Art. Her archive-based work on art historical method, especially Germanic, has yielded to date some twenty-five articles as well as two books: an edition of Edgar Wind's published and unpublished writings on Michelangelo (2000) and a co-edited volume *Verzetteln als Methode: Der humanistische Ikonologe William S. Heckscher* (2008). She has sat on some 60 dissertation committees in various capacities and has mentored many young scholars outside Michigan. Her dedication to undergraduate and graduate teaching has been recognized by the LSA Excellence in Teaching Award (1999) and the Prize for Excellence in Teaching Medieval Studies from the MAA (2019). It is directly owing to her efforts that the department has been able to launch initiatives such as postdoctoral and visiting student fellowships and to secure endowed positions.

The Regents now salute this distinguished scholar and teacher by naming **Elizabeth Sears, George H. Forsyth Jr. Collegiate Professor Emerita of the History of Art and professor emerita of the history of art.**

Requested by:



Jon Kinsey
Vice President and Secretary of the University

May 2024