

THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Regents Communication

ACTION REQUEST

Subject: Report of Faculty Retirement

Action Requested: Adoption of Retirement Memoir

Kerry Charles Larson, Ph.D., professor of English language and literature in the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, retired from active faculty status on May 31, 2025.

Professor Larson earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1977 from the University of Iowa, and a Master of Arts in 1980 and a Doctorate in 1983 from The Johns Hopkins University. Professor Larson joined the faculty at the University of Michigan as assistant professor in 1982 and was promoted through the ranks to professor in 2007.

Professor Larson's scholarship on nineteenth-century American literature combines a broad historical and theoretical perspective with incisive close reading. His rigorous and imaginative analyses offer new insights into canonical authors, such as Whitman, Emerson, and Stowe, and striking engagements with lesser-known figures, such as Lydia Sigourney. His sustained inquiry into how writers wrestled with complex concepts like democratic consensus and equality provides not only new perspective on U.S. history, but also vital insights for the present day.

Professor Larson has been a dedicated undergraduate teacher, whose students respond to his deep knowledge of his material and commitment to open inquiry. Graduate students drawn to work with him praise his fierce intellect and generosity. To quote one of them, he offers "that combination of academic rigor, critical example, and unflagging support that every student hopes for from an advisor."

Throughout his career Professor Larson has been an impressively thoughtful and hard-working contributor to the work of his department, the university, and the academic profession. Among many admirably performed assignments for English, his term as graduate chair was notable. That was followed by eight years of service at the Rackham School of Graduate Studies, where he brought a scholar's discipline and disposition to his daily dealings as senior associate dean. Professor Larson helped win and administer multiple external grants; his leadership was especially important, over a period of many years extending beyond his appointment at Rackham, in an innovative, many-faceted exchange program between the university and two selective regional colleges. Professor Larson's humane, inquisitive, modest style and integrity have made him a highly valued colleague.

The Regents now salute this distinguished scholar by naming **Kerry Charles Larson, professor emeritus of English language and literature**.

Requested by:



Jon Kinsey
Vice President and Secretary of the University

May 2025