

THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Regents Communication

ACTION REQUEST

Subject: Report of Faculty Retirement

Action Requested: Adoption of Retirement Memoir

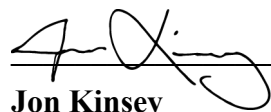
Donald R. Zak, Ph.D., Arthur F. Thurnau Professor, Alexander H. Smith Distinguished University Professor of Ecology, professor of natural resources, School for Environment and Sustainability, professor of ecology and evolutionary biology, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts and professor of program in the environment, School for Environment and Sustainability and College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, retired from active faculty status on May 31, 2025.

Donald Zak earned his B.S. degree in forest ecology from the The Ohio State University in 1981. He earned his M.S. in forest ecology from the University of Idaho in 1983, and received his Ph.D. in forest ecology from Michigan State University in 1987. After completing a postdoctoral research appointment at the University of Minnesota, he came to the University of Michigan in 1988 as an assistant professor of natural resources in the School of Natural Resources and Environment, now the School for Environment and Sustainability. He was promoted to associate professor in 1994, and to professor in 2000. In 2003, he was appointed as a professor of ecology and evolutionary biology. In 2009, he was appointed as the Burton V. Barnes Collegiate Professor of Ecology, and in 2017, was appointed as an Arthur F. Thurnau Professor. Professor Zak was appointed the Alexander H. Smith Distinguished University Professor of Ecology 2020.

Professor Zak is one of the nation's foremost ecologists, and the world leader in the study of soil microbial communities. He has developed a new branch of ecology which unifies molecular biology and ecology to understand the response of organisms and ecosystems to environmental stressors. Professor Zak's eminence as an ecologist has been recognized by many awards. Among these, he was named a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science in 2017, and was elected as a fellow of the Ecological Society of America in 2020. In 2009, the Soil Science Society of America awarded Professor Zak one of its highest honors, the Francis Clark Distinguished Lectureship.

The Regents now salute this distinguished faculty member by naming **Donald R. Zak, Arthur F. Thurnau Professor Emeritus, Alexander H. Smith Distinguished University Professor Emeritus of Ecology, professor emeritus of natural resources, professor emeritus of ecology and evolutionary biology, and professor emeritus of program in the environment.**

Requested by:



Jon Kinsey
Vice President and Secretary of the University

May 2025