

The University of Michigan Regents Communication

Request for Action

Subject: Report of Faculty Retirement

Action Requested: Adoption of Retirement Memoir

Jill Becker, Ph.D., Patricia Y. Gurin Collegiate Professor of Psychology, professor of psychology College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, and research professor, Michigan Neuroscience Institute, Medical School, retired from active faculty status on May 24, 2026.

Professor Becker received her B.A. (1973) and M.A. (1976) degrees from the University of Kansas, and her Ph.D. (1980) degree from the University of Illinois. Professor Becker joined the University of Michigan faculty as a lecturer and assistant research scientist in 1983, and was appointed as assistant professor in 1987, promoted to associate professor in 1992, and to professor in 1997. Professor Becker has served as associate dean of academic affairs in the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, and as associate director of the Neuroscience Ph.D. Program. Her contributions helped develop mentoring policies and promotion policies that facilitated student and junior faculty success, and made the promotion process more transparent and fair.

Professor Becker is a scientific leader in the study of neurobiological sex differences in the brain, and their influence on psychological functions. Her work identified neurobiological sex differences in brain mechanisms that contribute to vulnerability to drug addiction, and which influence natural motivations such as appetite for food or sexual motivation. Professor Becker's research discovered sex differences in the release of the neurotransmitter, dopamine, in a brain structure called the striatum (important in movement and motivation). Professor Becker's work also showed that neuroendocrine sex differences in striatal dopamine release are modulated by early life hormonal experiences, both around birth and in adolescence, as well as by adult estrogen fluctuations. Regarding drug addiction, Professor Becker's work also revealed how sex differences in striatal dopamine function can cause females to accelerate cocaine use, as well as other drugs of abuse, more rapidly than males, increasing the vulnerability to addiction. Professor Becker is a recent recipient of the Bernice Grafstein Award for Mentoring awarded by the Society for Neuroscience, the Daniel S. Lehrman Lifetime Achievement Award awarded by the Society for Behavioral Neuroendocrinology, the FABBS IDEA Lifetime Achievement Award from the Federation of Brain and Behavioral Sciences, and the Neal Miller Distinguished Lecture Award awarded by the American Psychological Association.

The Regents now salute this distinguished faculty member by naming **Jill Becker, Patricia Y. Gurin Collegiate Professor Emerita of Psychology, professor emerita of psychology, and research professor emerita, Michigan Neuroscience Institute.**

Requested by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jon Kinsey". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jon" and last name "Kinsey" clearly distinguishable.

Jon Kinsey

Vice President and Secretary of the University

May 2026