

# The University of Michigan Regents Communication

## Request for Action

### Subject: Report of Faculty Retirement

#### Action Requested: Adoption of Retirement Memoir

**Freda Herseth, M.M.**, Arthur F. Thurnau Professor and professor of music in the School of Music, Theatre & Dance, retired from active faculty status on May 24, 2026.

Professor Herseth received a B.M. in 1977 from the University of Puget Sound and an M.M. in Voice in 1979 from the Eastman School of Music. She began her academic career as Instructor of Voice at Lehigh University (1981–1983) and Guest Teacher for Jan DeGaetani at Eastman in 1982. From 1988 to 1995, she operated a private voice studio in Stuttgart, Germany. In 1995, she joined the University of Michigan as assistant professor of music, serving until 1999, and taught and directed opera scenes at the Brevard Music Center from 1997 to 1999. Professor Herseth was promoted to associate professor of music (1999–2011), and served as professor of voice at the Cleveland Institute of Music (2001–2002). Since 2002, she has been a singing voice specialist at the UM Vocal Health Center in the Department of Laryngology. Professor Herseth taught voice and opera scenes in the university’s Florence, Italy program (2004–2010), serving as director (2009–2010). She was named Arthur F. Thurnau Professor in 2005 and promoted to professor of music in 2012.

Professor Herseth has performed over forty operatic roles and premiered numerous new works across Europe and the United States. She received critical acclaim for her performance with Riccardo Muti and La Scala Opera Orchestra and was lauded as “a mezzo-soprano discovery” in the title role of *La Cenerentola* in Munich. Professor Herseth’s international career includes appearances in Israel, at Paris’s Opéra Bastille, Stuttgart Opera, Moscow Conservatory, and premieres at major festivals and with leading orchestras. A dedicated teacher, Professor Herseth’s students have won Metropolitan Opera National Auditions at every level, with three Grand Finals winners in 2018 and 2024, and a Grand Finalist in 2025. Alumni have performed at leading houses including the Metropolitan Opera, Santa Fe, San Francisco, Los Angeles, St. Louis, Seattle, Covent Garden, Paris, and throughout Europe. Her students teach at universities and public schools nationwide and serve as arts administrators in organizations such as the Metropolitan Opera and National Sawdust.

The Regents now salute this distinguished faculty member by naming **Freda Herserth, Arthur F. Thurnau Professor Emerita and professor emerita of music.**

Requested by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jon Kinsey', with a stylized flourish at the end.

**Jon Kinsey**

Vice President and Secretary of the University

May 2026