

## THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

### *Regents Communication*

#### **ACTION REQUEST**

**Subject:** Report of Faculty Retirement  
**Action Requested:** Adoption of Retirement Memoir

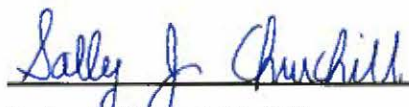
**Robert U. Simpson, Ph.D.**, professor of pharmacology in the Medical School, retired from active faculty status on April 30, 2019.

Professor Simpson received his B.S. (1973) degree from the University of California, Davis and his Ph.D. (1979) degree from the University of Wisconsin, Madison. He joined the University of Michigan faculty as an assistant professor in 1982, and was promoted to associate professor in 1990, and professor in 1998.

Professor Simpson's research interest was endocrine pharmacology, with a specific focus on vitamin D endocrinology and signal transduction. He was the first to isolate, purify, and characterize the vitamin D receptor (VDR), which led to the generation of antibodies, gene clones, and VDR knockout mice. Utilizing these tools, Professor Simpson and his colleagues discovered novel target organs and diseases associated with vitamin D function and dysfunction. These discoveries resulted in a tremendous increase in new knowledge of vitamin D's importance and led to new therapeutic approaches for diseases such as heart failure, psoriasis, cancer, and inflammatory bowel disease. He generated new university patents, raised nearly \$1M in entrepreneurial funding, and co-founded Cardiavent Inc. to advance the development of a selective VDR agonist for the treatment of cardiovascular and renal diseases. He co-authored over 85 scholarly articles and book chapters. A highly regarded educator, Professor Simpson taught graduate, pharmacy, medical, and nursing students, and was responsible for initiating a number of new courses. He served as the director or co-director of the department's general pharmacology courses for over 20 years. Professor Simpson initiated, taught, and directed the endocrine pharmacology course for graduate students for over 30 years. He trained seven graduate students and 11 postdoctoral fellows who are now successful scientists and scholars. Professor Simpson was chair of the department's Graduate Program Committee from 1990-94. His numerous honors include presenting the Rachel A. Schemmel Endowed Lecture and being appointed the Malcolm Trout Visiting Professor at Michigan State University in 2009.

The Regents now salute this distinguished faculty member by naming **Robert U. Simpson, professor emeritus of pharmacology**.

**Requested by:**



**Sally J. Churchill, J.D.**  
Vice President and Secretary of the University

**June 2019**