

The University of Michigan Regents Communication Request for Action

Subject: Report of Faculty Retirement

Action Requested: Adoption of Retirement Memoir

James T. Elder, M.D., Ph.D., Kirk D. Wuepper Professor of Molecular Genetic Dermatology and professor of dermatology in the Medical School, retired from active faculty status on August 8, 2026.

Dr. Elder received his B.S. from Northwestern University (1974) and his M.D. (1981) and Ph.D. (1982) from the Yale University School of Medicine. He completed an internal medicine internship (1983), and dermatology residency and research fellowship (1986) at the University of Washington School of Medicine, followed by a senior research fellowship in dermatology at the University of Michigan (1988). He joined the University of Michigan faculty as an assistant professor of dermatology in 1988, was appointed assistant professor of radiation oncology in 1992, then jointly promoted to associate professor in 1994, and to professor in 2002. He was named the Kirk D. Wuepper Professor of Molecular Genetic Dermatology in 2008.

Dr. Elder's landmark research focused on the molecular genetics of psoriasis, psoriatic arthritis, and related inflammatory disorders. He also maintained a long-time interest in keratinocyte (KC) biology and autocrine mechanisms of KC growth regulation. An early leader in genetic linkage, HLA association and large-scale genome-wide association studies (GWAS), his laboratory identified the PSORS1 risk allele (HLA-C*0602) and extended the known genetic architecture of psoriasis beyond the major histocompatibility complex. Dr. Elder co-led international GWAS meta-analyses that identified over 100 susceptibility loci and established most psoriasis risk variants act through gene regulation versus coding variation. His group also advanced polygenic risk scores to identify patients at risk for psoriatic arthritis. His lab integrated ATAC-seq, RNA-seq, and immune profiling to define how risk variants influence T-cell activation and immune memory. His research was strongly supported by the National Institutes of Health and the National Psoriasis Foundation and widely published with over 260 peer-reviewed papers. Through his longstanding leadership of the University of Michigan Training Program in Cell and Molecular Dermatology, he guided research training for numerous early career investigators.

The Regents now salute this distinguished faculty member by naming **James T. Elder, professor emeritus of dermatology**.

Requested by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jon Kinsey', with a stylized, cursive script.

Jon Kinsey

Vice President and Secretary of the University

July 2026