

THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Regents Communication

ACTION REQUEST

Subject: Report of Faculty Retirement

Action Requested: Adoption of Retirement Memoir

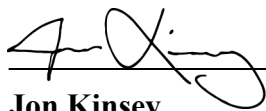
James R. Sayer, Ph.D., research scientist, University of Michigan Transportation Research Institute, College of Engineering, retired from active faculty status on September 30, 2025.

Dr. Sayer received his B.S. in biopsychology from the University of Michigan in 1988 and his M.S. in industrial and systems engineering from Virginia Tech in 1991. He then received his Ph.D. degree in industrial and systems engineering from Virginia Tech in 1993. He joined the University of Michigan faculty as an assistant research scientist in 1993, and was promoted to associate research scientist in 2008, and research scientist in 2012. In 2016, Dr. Sayer became the director of the University of Michigan Transportation Research Institute (UMTRI), serving in that role for nine years before stepping down and entering phased retirement. Dr. Sayer has held adjunct appointments in the Department of Psychology and the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering. During his time as a faculty member, Dr. Sayer held several service roles at U-M, including chair of the Behavioral Sciences Institutional Review Board and chair of the Institutional Autonomous Systems Committee.

Dr. Sayer's research was focused on transportation safety, particularly how humans interact with various elements of vehicles and the transportation system – including driver distraction and pedestrian safety. He oversaw several of the first modern-day field operational tests of driver assistance systems (adaptive cruise control, forward collision warning, lane departure warning, and wireless vehicle-to-everything communication). He was the principal investigator on approximately \$90M of sponsored research at U-M and published numerous journal articles, conference papers, and technical reports based on his research. Many of the research findings he produced went into the development of standards or product development by vehicle manufacturers. He is perhaps best known for conceiving of and designing the U-M's test facility for autonomous and connected vehicles on North Campus, known as Mcity (2013-2015). As director of UMTRI, he initiated the movement of the institute from the Office of the Vice President of Research to the College of Engineering.

The Regents now salute this distinguished faculty member by naming **James R. Sayer, Research Scientist Emeritus, University of Michigan Transportation Research Institute.**

Requested by:



Jon Kinsey

Vice President and Secretary of the University

October 2025