The University of Michigan Regents Communication

Request for Action

Subject: Report of Faculty Retirement

Action Requested: Adoption of Retirement Memoir

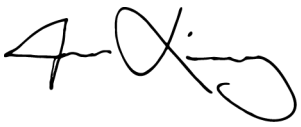
James Burnstein, M.A., John H. Mitchell Professor of Entertainment and professor of film, television and media in the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, retired from active faculty status on December 31, 2026.

Professor Burnstein received his Bachelor of Arts degree in English language & literature in 1972 (Phi Beta Kappa) from the University of Michigan and his Master of Arts degree in English in 1974, also from U-M. Professor Burnstein joined the faculty of the Program in Film & Video Studies (now FTVM) at the University of Michigan in 1995 as a lecturer II to serve as the director of the Screenwriting Program. In 2018, he was appointed professor with tenure.

Professor Burnstein returned to his alma mater as an accomplished screenwriter in 1995, following the release of his first feature film, *Renaissance Man*. He was tasked by Professor Gaylyn Studlar, the director of the Program in Film & Video Studies, with building a screenwriting program. Professor Burnstein's plan called for a first of its kind rewrite course, a screenplay library, and a guest artist series. Under Professor Burnstein's direction, Michigan's nationally acclaimed screenwriting program today features nine classes in screenwriting, television writing and production. Many of Professor Burnstein's students are now working as successful film and television writers, showrunners, producers, actors, or executives. His own screenwriting career has continued to flourish, having sold 19 screenplays and two screen stories to every major Hollywood studio, as well as ABC, ESPN, Showtime, and several independent production companies. A Lifetime Member of the Writers Guild of America, his credits include *D3: The Mighty Ducks*; and *Love and Honor*, co-written with Garrett K. Schiff. Other Burnstein-Schiff credits include *Ruffian*, *Naughty or Nice*, and *Ham-let*, a graphic novel for Dark Horse Entertainment. He also produced the independent feature film *Ocean of Pearls.*

The Regents now salute this distinguished scholar by naming **James Burnstein, professor emeritus of film, television and media.**

Respectfully submitted:



Jon Kinsey

Vice President and Secretary of the University

November 2026