The University of Michigan Regents Communication

Request for Action

Subject: Report of Faculty Retirement

Action Requested: Adoption of Retirement Memoir

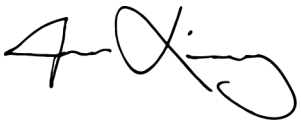
Henry Wright, Ph.D., Albert Clanton Spaulding Distinguished University Professor of Anthropology, professor of anthropology, and curator, Museum of Anthropological Archaeology, in the College of Literature, Science and the Arts, retired from active faculty status on December 31, 2026.

Professor Wright attended the University of Michigan, earning a Bachelor of Arts in 1964, and the University of Chicago, earning a Master of Arts in 1965 and a Doctorate in anthropology in 1967. Professor Wright joined the faculty at the University of Michigan as an assistant professor in the Department of Anthropology and assistant curator of Near Eastern archaeology in the Museum of Anthropology in 1967. He was promoted through the ranks to professor and curator in 1977. In 2007, he was named the Albert Clanton Spaulding Distinguished University Professor of Anthropology.

Professor Wright's international, cross-cultural research is essential to understanding the development of urban economies and hierarchical control networks that explore the process of early state formation in the Middle East and the later rise of the Malagasy state in Madagascar. He was invited as a visiting professor at Jinan University from 2003-2014 and a member of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences from 2003 to train advanced archaeology students. He also made contributions in North America, from documentation of Ice Age hunters to Ann Arbor's urban archaeology. Professor Wright was director of the Museum of Anthropology from 1989-1992, elected to the US National Academy of Sciences in 1994, held a MacArthur Fellowship from 1993-1998, was awarded a Gold Medal for Distinguished Archaeological Achievement by the American Institute of Archaeology in 2009, and received a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Society for American Archaeology in 2013.

The Regents now salute this distinguished researcher and teacher by naming **Henry Wright, Albert Clanton Spaulding Distinguished University Professor Emeritus of Anthropology, professor emeritus of anthropology, and curator emeritus, Museum of Anthropological Archaeology.**

Respectfully submitted:



Jon Kinsey
Vice President and Secretary of the University

November 2026