

THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Regents Communication

ACTION REQUEST

Subject: Report of Faculty Retirement

Action Requested: Adoption of Retirement Memoir

Ralph G. Williams, Ph.D., Arthur F. Thurnau Professor and professor of English language and literature in the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, will retire from active faculty status on December 31, 2011.

Professor Williams received his B.A. degree from Andrews University in 1963, and his M.A. and Ph.D. degrees from the University of Michigan in 1964 and 1970, respectively. He served on the faculty of Cornell University from 1968-70, and joined the University of Michigan faculty as an assistant professor in 1970. He was promoted to associate professor in 1975, and professor in 1993. He was named Arthur F. Thurnau Professor in 1991.

Professor Williams' wide-ranging research interests include medieval and renaissance literatures, Shakespeare, literary theory, biblical studies, and comparative literature. In addition to publications on medieval and renaissance poetics, he has contributed to holocaust studies and studies in comparative Abrahamic religions. Professor Williams taught widely in the English department graduate and undergraduate curricula and is particularly well known for his popular undergraduate courses in Great Books, Shakespeare, the Bible, and comparative religion. Recognition of his extraordinary teaching record include the Class of 1923 Award (1974), the Amoco Teaching Award (1987), the Golden Apple Teaching Award (1992), Lifetime Achievement Golden Apple Award (2009), the Excellence in Education Teaching Award (1995, 1996, 2000, and 2001), and *Michigan Daily's* Best Professor (ten times). Professor Williams served in a number of administrative positions within the English department (graduate chair and associate chair) and within the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts (head of Great Books, director of UM Programs in Florence, director of the Honors Program, and director of the Program on Studies in Religion). He was an active supporter of the Alumni Association through participation in numerous review committees and task forces, and of the University Musical Society, where he was particularly active in fostering and nurturing the University's collaborations with the Royal Shakespeare Company. His diverse career has provided a role model of academic excellence for his students, colleagues, and friends, and was celebrated in his retirement symposium, Sacred and Canonical Texts in Public Culture (April 2010).

The Regents salute this distinguished teacher and researcher by naming **Ralph G. Williams Arthur F. Thurnau Professor Emeritus and professor emeritus of English language and literature.**

Requested by:

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

December 2011