

THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Regents Communication

ACTION REQUEST

Subject: Report of Faculty Retirement
Action Requested: Adoption of Retirement Memoir

Sidonie Smith, Ph.D., Lorna G. Goodison Distinguished University Professor of English and Women's Studies, professor of English language and literature, and professor of women's studies in the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, retired from active faculty status on December 31, 2019.

Professor Smith received her B.A. and M.A. degrees from the University of Michigan in 1966. She received her Ph.D. degree from Case Western Reserve University in 1971. She joined the University of Michigan faculty as a professor in 1996.

Professor Smith is a towering figure in the study of life writing. She is the author or co-author of nine monographs, and has edited or co-edited six collections, two anthologies, and a memoir. She is nationally and internationally recognized as a founder, theorist, and historian of her field, who continues to make important interventions, including regularly updating her influential guide, *Reading Autobiography* (2010). Her interest in life writing spans the topics of women's self-representation, trauma, human rights, ethics, slave narratives, travel, graphic memoir, and on-line personas. Across this body of theory, interpretation, and pedagogy, she explores the historically contingent components of memory, experience, identity, embodiment, agency, and politics that comprise autobiographical acts, as well as the flexibility of formal features such as genre, structure, and rhetoric. Known as an avid collaborator, Professor Smith has played a national and international role in advocating and planning for the future of the humanities, most notably through her 2016 open-access book, *Manifesto for the Humanities: Transforming Doctoral Education in Good Enough Times* (which re-envision the intellectual mission of a doctorate), her work with the Mellon Foundation, and as president of the Modern Language Association. At the University of Michigan, Professor Smith proved herself to be a gifted administrator, chairing the women's studies and English departments, and directing the Institute for the Humanities. Under her creative and energetic leadership, these units became more international and diverse in their faculty and curriculum, more inclusive of social action as part of the learning landscape, more capable of hosting robust interdisciplinary conversations and engaging with digital technology, and more outward facing in their own self-presentation.

The Regents now salute this distinguished scholar by naming **Sidonie Smith, Lorna G. Goodison Distinguished University Professor Emerita of English and Women's Studies, professor emerita of English language and literature, and professor emerita of women's studies.**

Requested by:



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

December 2019