

THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Regents Communication

ACTION REQUEST

Subject: Report of Faculty Retirement

Action Requested: Adoption of Retirement Memoir

Arland Thornton, Ph.D., professor of sociology in the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts (LSA) and research professor in the Institute of Social Research, retired from active faculty status on December 31, 2022.

Professor Thornton received his B.S. (1968) degree from Brigham Young University. He then attended the University of Michigan where he earned his M.A. (1973) and Ph.D. (1975) degrees. He joined the University of Michigan faculty as an assistant research scientist at the Survey Research Center in 1975. He was hired as an assistant professor by the Department of Sociology in 1981, and was promoted to professor in 1988.

Professor Thornton retires as one of the world's leading social demographers. Throughout his career he demonstrated great analytical breadth and theoretical innovation. His decision to transform an ongoing Detroit Area Study into an intergenerational project interviewing both a birth cohort of children, as well as their mothers, resulted in the Intergenerational Panel Study of Mothers and Children, for which he served as the principal investigator for more than 25 years. Under his direction, this study transformed the field of family demography through several groundbreaking studies of intergenerational influences on marriage, divorce, fertility, sexual behavior, and living arrangements. His work in the U.S. also includes numerous creative methodological advances now used by a wide range of studies. One of his best contributions is the Life History Calendar method, a semi-structured interview that simultaneously and flexibly collects standardized data across multiple domains of a person's life.

Among his many accomplishments, Thornton was president of the Population Association of America (2001) and recipient of the Distinguished Career Award from the Family Section of the American Sociological Association (2000). Furthermore, in his more than 47 years of service to Michigan, he mentored a new generation of creative social demographers who were outstanding in their scholarly impact, some of whom are now members of the faculty in Michigan Sociology.

The Regents now salute this distinguished teacher and scholar for his dedicated service by naming **Arland Thornton, professor emeritus of sociology and research professor emeritus**.

Requested by:



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

December 2022