

THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Regents Communication

ACTION REQUEST

Subject: Report of Faculty Retirement

Action Requested: Adoption of Retirement Memoir

Shirley Verrett, James Earl Jones Distinguished University Professor of Music and professor of music (voice) in the School of Music, Theatre & Dance, retired from active faculty status on May 31, 2010.


Professor Verrett graduated from the Julliard School of Music in 1960. She joined the University of Michigan faculty as professor of music (voice) in 1996, following a career that reached the pinnacle of success in the opera world.

An illustrious star of the world's leading opera houses, Professor Verrett has sung to acclaim in the principal music capitals of the world, including the Metropolitan Opera, La Scala, the Royal Opera House (London), the Bolshoi Opera, the Vienna Staatsoper, and major American houses. She has been featured in broadcasts of "Live from Lincoln Center," has performed in numerous concerts in the U.S. and abroad, and has served on two White House commissions to preserve American antiquity. In 2003, Professor Verrett published *I Never Walked Alone*, a memoir, which describes, in her elegant and benevolent voice, her trail-blazing experiences as an African American woman breaking into the classical music world.

Professor Verrett has been the recipient of prestigious honors and awards, including the Marian Anderson Award (1957) and the French government's Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres (1970) and Commandeur des Arts et des Lettres (1984), and she has received honorary doctorates from the College of the Holy Cross (1978) and Northeastern University (1987). In recognition of the excellence, enthusiasm, and commitment she embodied in her teaching as well as her singing, Professor Verrett was appointed the James Earl Jones Distinguished University Professor of Music in 1999 and received the Harold Haugh Award for Excellence in Studio Teaching in 2008-09. Professor Verrett possesses memorable grace and extraordinary kindness. She will be remembered fondly for her peerless professional knowledge and her unfailingly generous mentorship.

The Regents now salute this gifted performer and teacher for her dedicated service by naming **Shirley Verrett James Earl Jones Distinguished University Professor Emerita of Music and professor emerita of music (voice)**.

Requested by:



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

September 2010