

THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
REGENTS COMMUNICATION

Adopted by the Regents

October 15, 2009

ACTION REQUEST

Subject: Report of Faculty Death

Action Requested: Adoption of Memorial Statement

The Regents of the University of Michigan acknowledge with profound sadness the death of **Bruce D. Parfitt, Ph.D.**, associate professor of biology, Department of Biology, College of Arts and Sciences, University of Michigan-Flint, who died on September 3, 2009 at age 56.

A native of Oshkosh, Wisconsin, Professor Parfitt received his B.S. degree from the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh in 1977, and his M.S. and Ph.D. degrees from Arizona State University in 1980 and 1991, respectively. From 1991-95 he was assistant scientific editor and then scientific and managing editor of *Flora of North America* at the Missouri Botanical Garden. He joined the University of Michigan-Flint faculty as assistant professor in 1995, and was promoted to associate professor in 2001.

Within the Department of Biology, Professor Parfitt served as chief botanist, bringing a wealth of experience to this position. His skills as a writer and editor and his classical training in plant taxonomy significantly strengthened the undergraduate and graduate biology programs. Among his students he was, as one undergrad put it, "a slacker's nightmare." While he kept high standards, edited papers relentlessly, and challenged assumptions, he was generous in the time he devoted to students' success in the classroom, the lab, the field, and in their personal lives. He was chair of the Department of Biology from 2004-07, and served on several committees within the department and the college. Professor Parfitt was a skillful editor and a solid scholar, whose publications included over 35 book chapters/sections, more than 25 refereed journal articles, and many other published writings. He was perhaps best known for having co-authored the definitive work on cacti—volume four of the prestigious compendium, *Flora of North America*—a work that reflects his discovery of new species and encyclopedic knowledge. During the final stage of his illness, he completed drafts of manuscripts about five plant families for the "Vascular Plants of Arizona" project.

Professor Parfitt was a valued colleague whose untimely passing will leave a void on the Flint campus. As we mourn the loss of this esteemed scholar and teacher, our condolences go to his mother, Myrtle Parfitt, his brothers, Arden and Craig, and their families.

Requested by:



Sally J. Churchill

Vice President and Secretary of the University

October 2009