

THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
Regents Communication
ACTION REQUEST

Adopted by the Regents
May 15, 2008

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 **Donald Ulysses Walden**, associate professor of music (jazz studies), School of Music, Theatre & Dance. Professor Walden died on April 6, 2008, at the age of 70, from complications due to cancer.

Professor Walden began his academic career as a visiting scholar of jazz studies at Michigan State University from 1991-92, and he was a visiting assistant professor of jazz saxophone at Oberlin Conservatory of Music in 1993-94. He joined the University of Michigan faculty as assistant professor of music in 1995, and was promoted to associate professor in 2002.

Professor Walden came of age in Detroit in the 1950s during that city's golden age of modern jazz. He studied at the Larry Teal School of Music in Detroit, learning improvisation from Detroit pianist and bebop great Barry Harris, and saxophone from Yusef Lateef. He toured and recorded with Aretha Franklin, Stevie Wonder, the Temptations, and the Four Tops. In the 1980s, Professor Walden created the New World Stage in Harmonie Park in Detroit, which became a training ground for young musicians. In 1982, Professor Walden formed the Detroit Jazz Orchestra (DJO) out of the need to develop a civic jazz orchestra to represent the city of Detroit. The DJO received the Governor's Arts Award for Outstanding Achievement in the arts in 1985, and Professor Walden received the Jazz Master Award from Arts Midwest in 1986. In 1990, he produced "Yardbird Suite" at the Detroit International Jazz Festival, a tribute to Charlie Parker that brought together a big band, 18 strings, and a choir; the concert is still remembered to this day.

"With his long-tall frame and distinguished carriage," wrote Mark Stryker in the *Detroit Free Press*, "he was a standard bearer for jazz in Detroit, a mentor to generations of students and a beacon of ambition and integrity for his peers." Professor Walden will be remembered as an inspiring and exceptional teacher who was highly revered by his students, and as a world-renowned jazz saxophonist and composer. He received significant recognition for his excellence and service to the arts throughout the state of Michigan and the jazz community.

As we mourn the loss of our beloved colleague, we also extend our heartfelt condolences to his wife, Marsha, his two daughters, Deirdre Jones and Aisha Walden, and many relatives and close friends.

Requested by:



Sally J. Churchill

Vice President and Secretary of the University

May 2008