

SARAH THOMASON'S BRIEF CV

January 2026

After receiving my Ph.D. from Yale University in 1968, I taught Slavic linguistics at Yale (1968-1971) and then general linguistics at the University of Pittsburgh (1972-1998). Since 1999 I've been at the University of Michigan, where I am now, since retiring in 2021, the Bernard Bloch Distinguished University Professor of Linguistics emerita. I was Chair of the Linguistics Department 2010-2013. I worked with elders at the Séliš-Ql'ispé Culture Committee in St. Ignatius, Montana, from 1981 to 2019, compiling a dictionary and other materials for the tribes' language program. Most of my research focuses on contact-induced language change, Salishan linguistics, and endangered languages, but I also have a continuing interest in debunking linguistic pseudoscience. My most-cited publication by far is my co-authored monograph *Language contact, creolization, and genetic linguistics* (1988, 1991); a 2001 textbook, *Language contact: an introduction*, is a distant second in citation numbers, and an even more distant third is my 1983 article 'Chinook Jargon in areal and historical context' (in *Language*). Most of my small handful of publications on Séliš-Ql'ispé (a.k.a. Montana Salish) are on the Publications page of this website; the most ambitious is the co-authored paper 'Transitivity in Séliš-Ql'ispé' (2024).

I was editor of *Language* 1988-1994. In 2000 I was President of the Society for the Study of the Indigenous Languages of the Americas, and in 2009 I was President of the Linguistic Society of America (LSA). I was Chair of the Linguistics & Language Sciences section of the American Association for the Advancement of Science in 1996 and Secretary of the section 2001-2005. I've served on various LSA committees (as an elected member of the Executive Committee 2001-2003) and taught at five summer LSA Linguistic Institutes (as the Hermann and Klara H. Collitz Professor in 1999); the 2013 Linguistic Institute, at the University of Michigan, was dedicated to me. I'm a Fellow of the Linguistic Society of America and of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. In October 2012 Yale University's Graduate School Alumni Association awarded me the Wilbur Lucius Cross Medal, which is presented annually to "a small number of outstanding alumni" in recognition of "distinguished achievements".

A complete CV is available on this website, and see the 2022 article 'How I got here and where I'm going next' on the Publications page for an autobiographical career sketch.