

Lorraine E. Chickering AB'72, MBA'82

Lorraine (Chickie) Chickering came to Harvard from a working-class background in Danbury, CT, a “first-gen” matriculant who was only the fourth of 48 cousins in her generation to attend college.

She arrived with hopes of being a scientist but was frightened away early. She lived in Comstock Hall until joining 49 other North House women in the “experiment” in cohabitation who became “charter” Throp women in January 1970.

When not working to support her education, she was a singer and a “Loebie.” As one of the Radcliffe class marshals, she was active on the Class Committee that planned the first completely joint Harvard-Radcliffe Commencement. She remained an active volunteer and supporter for 45 years. As a contributor to the Winthrop House Renewal Project, she funded the Lorraine E. Chickering Music Room: Dedicated to the First Cohort of Winthrop Women.

She spent her first eight career years in university administration (mostly in development) at Harvard (counselor at the Career Center, independent contractor in London), Ithaca College, and Georgetown University. She is ABD in educational administration and organizational behavior at Cornell.

Ten years to the day after our Commencement she earned an MBA from HBS. She then spent 18 years in Telecommunications at COMSAT and Bell Atlantic. At Bell Atlantic she was promoted into a series of increasingly responsible executive positions, many being female firsts, culminating in her being named in 1993 as the first female president of a vertical line of business: Public and Operator Services (\$700 million in revenue, 7,900 employees).

It was a good run. As Verizon worked to merge with GTE, she took a few years off and then worked again in the nonprofit sector. Since going part-time in 2006, she has focused on her theater boards and her photography business (now an avocation). Her photos, taken on several continents, often focus on creative captures of the natural and architectural worlds and have been juried into multiple East Coast expos and exhibitions.

Other affiliations:

Bell Atlantic Foundation: board member, 1994–98; vice president, 1994–97; acting president, 1997–98

Green Mountain Power board of directors: served on audit, compensation, and governance committees, 1994–2004

Kennedy Center Circles board member, 1999–2005

Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company board member, 1997–2015

Advisory committee on the creation of the Shakespeare Academy of Classical Acting, 1997–98