

# ONLINE FEATURE

## ENGINEERING, ART AND ADVENTURE

By Edith Jeffrey '62

I was one of three women in a class of 636 who graduated from Newark College of Engineering in June 1962, receiving a bachelor of science in electrical engineering. During my four years at NCE, I was a member of AIEE, IEEE and IRE professional societies, co-captain of the cheerleaders, recording secretary and corresponding secretary of the Class of 1962, a member of the 1962 *Nucleus* art staff and a member of the first sorority for co-ed engineers, Sigma Chi Epsilon. In the summer of 1960, I was the first female student ever hired by Hoffmann-La Roche in the drafting section of their Engineering Department.

After graduation, I joined ITT Federal Laboratories in Nutley,

New Jersey, performing data-communication systems studies and participating in the design of tropospheric-scatter and microwave-communication systems for the U.S. military. Extracurricular activities included attending the Art Students League in New York City to study clay sculpting. In 1966, I left ITT to join Computer Sciences Corporation.

At Computer Sciences, I continued to design, develop and implement data-communication systems. Traveling to Heidelberg, Germany, in 1967, I worked for a year and a half on a contract CSC had with the U.S. Army to upgrade their tropospheric-scatter and line-of-sight communication systems. Shortly after arriving, I enrolled in the University of

Maryland extension program to study the German language. I also flew to London to purchase a motorcycle for touring Germany since I had been an avid motorcyclist in the States. In fact, I had ridden many times with a college classmate, J. Sparks Remezczy, who is remembered "In Memoriam" in the 1962 *Nucleus*.

After the terms of the U. S. Army contract were fulfilled, I took a leave of absence and remained in Germany to study stone sculpting at the School of Fine Arts in Mannheim. Completing the art course, I and some friends started driving to India in April 1969, traveling through Italy, Greece, Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Kashmir, India and Nepal, where I hiked in the Himalayas, and Sri Lanka. Bulgaria was included on the return to Germany. It was a once-in-a-lifetime trip filled with extraordinary adventures, some wondrous and others dangerous, such as being attacked by robbers with swords in Pakistan's Swat Valley.

Returning to New Jersey from this adventure in November 1970, I worked for Computer Sciences Corporation for several months and then drove to San Francisco in 1971 to begin an art career. Art had been my initial career of choice in high school. In San Francisco, I studied commercial art for two years and put a portfolio together. I worked in the commercial art field for several

years for small businesses and as a freelance artist. While residing in California, I traveled to Cuernavaca, Mexico, where I studied stone and wood sculpting, watercolor painting, and drawing at the School of Fine Arts.

I moved back to New Jersey from San Francisco in 1977 and some months later moved to New York City. I subsequently reentered the engineering field as a program administrator for advanced-technology electronics projects at Diagnostic Retrieval Systems and began studying for an MBA at Pace University.

I joined Western Union International in 1978 as a project engineer in the Low Speed Engineering Group, designing and implementing customer networks. Subsequently, I advanced to manager of the Message Switching Engineering Group. While at WUI, I earned an MBA in finance from Pace. In 1981, I was inducted into the national honor society in business administration, Delta Mu Delta.

I accepted a position with Chase Manhattan Bank at the World Trade Center in 1983 as a telecommunications planning



Sculptures in walnut (above) and sandstone (left).



On a 1988 trip to Bolivia, in the Khala Ciudad Pass at 14,100 feet, Apacheta Shrine to gods of the mountain.

## SINCE RETIRING, I HAVE ENJOYED MY FREEDOM BY TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THE MANY CULTURAL EVENTS AVAILABLE IN NEW YORK CITY.

specialist. I became an engineer for their private worldwide X.25 packet switching data network, developing and implementing hardware and software technical interfaces to support Chase businesses, performing end-to-end test and acceptance, preparing technical documentation and handling problem escalations. In 1989, I was promoted to vice president, manager of the Chase Packet Switching Network. My extracurricular activities included earning a brown belt in karate.

During my years at Chase, I started taking physically challenging vacations. Trips included trekking in Patagonia, Venezuela, Bolivia, Ecuador, Norway, Costa Rica and Poland.

After another career change, I joined MFS Datanet in 1995 as manager of the New York Field Operations Group and then as a program manager. This experience included working with LAN/WAN installations, ATM nodes and routers/bridges. After MFS Datanet, I was employed as a consultant at EDS Corporation for Soft, where I was an implementation certification analyst.

In 1996, I joined Citigroup/Citishare Corporation as a business project manager. This position required managing end-to-end business and technical implementation of electronic funds transfer solutions for all Citibank businesses and ATM/POS networks such as Cirrus, NYCE and Visa. The work included requirements analysis, documentation, functional specifications, systems design, acceptance test plans, unit testing, user-acceptance testing and

implementation into production. During this time I was promoted to vice president, senior project manager. One example of the many projects that I implemented into production was ATM check image deposits for a Citi-branded third party ATM network. I received several awards for my work. Travel included trips to Guam and South Korea to initiate implementing Citibank business in those locations on the global network, work I performed until retiring in 2011.

In my last two years at Citigroup, I had the distinction of becoming the first Citishare Poet in Residence. I wrote 18 poems, mainly for entertainment and comic relief, which were read at monthly staff meetings. One poem, about a Citigroup-wide initiative, was posted on the home page of a Citigroup intranet community site for several months. Colleagues encouraged me to turn my talent for writing poetry into a business post-retirement.

I also continued my hiking/trekking vacations while at Citigroup. I hiked in England, Wales, Ireland, Scotland and Iceland, and drove a dogsled in Norway for a week, traveling over 100 miles. Hiking in national parks in the U.S. and Canada has included Glacier Park; the Canadian Rockies and Colorado Rockies; Zion, Bryce Canyon and the Canyonlands in Utah; Yellowstone in Wyoming; Big Bend Park in Texas; the Smoky Mountains in Tennessee; the Black Hills and Badlands of South Dakota; Yosemite and Death Valley in California. My



*Clockwise from top left: Harnessing sled dogs in Norway; snowshoeing in Grand Teton National Park, Wyoming; leaving tracks in Great Sand Dunes National Park, Colorado, 2008.*

winter vacations involved snowshoeing in the Canadian Rockies, Vermont, Idaho and Grand Teton Park among other places.

Since retiring, I have enjoyed my freedom by taking advantage of the many cultural events available in New York City.

I am relearning German and have joined the German speaking chorus at the Liederkranz Club in the city. In addition to singing, I am looking into resuming fine art activities and continuing my hiking. ■