

News

from the Illinois Board of Higher Education

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FORMER AT&T ILLINOIS PRESIDENT NAMED CHAIR OF ILLINOIS BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION

SPRINGFIELD – Carrie Hightman, former President of AT&T Illinois, has been named by Governor Rod Blagojevich as Chairman of the Illinois Board of Higher Education, succeeding James L. Kaplan, who has announced his retirement from the Board.

The Board is the coordinating agency for higher education in Illinois, overseeing budget recommendations, academic program approvals, policies that promote college affordability and access to and success in college, master planning, and collection of data about students and colleges and universities.

“Carrie Hightman’s business experience will bring a valuable perspective to the Board of Higher Education,” Governor Blagojevich said. “I am confident her experience and background will help ensure that all Illinoisans have access to a high quality education at our colleges and universities.”

“Creating and advancing higher education programs that promote an educated workforce is of critical importance to Illinois’ long-term economic viability,” said Hightman. “As a graduate of Illinois’ public education system, I’m committed to ensuring that our state’s academic institutions and students have access to enriching programs and resources that prepare them for success.”

A graduate of the University of Illinois, Hightman has a distinguished career in business leadership and in the practice of law. She was president of AT&T Illinois (formerly SBC) from 2001 until 2006, and before that spent 15 years with the prestigious Chicago law firm Schiff Hardin, leading its Energy, Telecommunications, and Public Utility Group.

After graduating from law school at Florida State University, Hightman served with the Florida Public Service Commission and later as associate counsel with the Florida Office of Public Counsel, representing consumers in a variety of public utility cases.

Hightman is a native of the Chicago area and is active in several professional associations, including current service as a Vice Chair of the Communications Committee of the Public Utility, Communications, and Transportation Law Section of the American Bar Association, past service as the Chair of the Public Utility Law Section of the Chicago Bar Association, and board membership with the Chicago Bar Foundation.

She also serves on the boards of several charitable and civic organizations, including Vice Chair of the Chicago Urban League, Vice Chair of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Foundation, and board member of the Lyric Opera of Chicago.

Hightman and her husband Harry live in Buffalo Grove. Their daughter is a senior in high school and their son is a senior at University of Illinois in Champaign.

James Kaplan served as Chairman of the Board since April 2003 and was a member of the Board since 1999.

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