

Harriett B. Rigas was born on April 30, 1934 in Winnipeg, Manitoba. She received her B.S. degree in 1956 from Queens University and briefly worked as an engineer at the Mayo Clinic before continuing her studies. She received her M.S. degree in 1959 and Ph.D. in electrical engineering in 1963, both from the University of Kansas. Following the completion of these degrees, Rigas again worked in private industry at Lockheed Missile and Space Company. She then joined the faculty at Washington State University in 1965, remaining there until 1980, creating the university's computer engineering program during her tenure. In 1984, Rigas was named chair of the electrical engineering department at the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, California. In 1987, Rigas joined the MSU faculty as professor and chair of electrical engineering, the first woman chair in the College of Engineering at MSU. Her tenure at MSU was cut short with her passing in 1989. Rigas was a gifted and pioneering electrical engineer with an international reputation for her work in computer technology and computer engineering education. She was instrumental in creating the technology to implement automatic updates on computers, eliminating the need to reinstall entire programs with every upgrade that became available.