

Barbara Chatten

Ph.D., Agricultural Economics, 1982

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Negotiating Around the World

Thinking on her feet fills much of Barbara Chatten's workdays, especially during the six months or so of every year that she spends at the Geneva, Switzerland, Office of the U.S. Trade Representative. So when she has a little time off from trade negotiations, she takes those overworked feet on mini-vacations in the Swiss countryside.

"Switzerland has an incredible train system. I ride the train out to different little towns. At each town you can get off the train, get a map showing where hiking trails are and how long they are, and you can walk," Chatten says. "And strange it may seem for Switzerland, you can find some trails that don't require you to be scurrying up a mountain or down narrow paths and ledges."



Living in Arlington, Va., and flying frequently to Geneva for extended stays, Chatten needs a portable and very part-time hobby. Hiking fills the bill on both continents. In Virginia, she also enjoys her own home's flower garden. Hiking is especially beneficial in Switzerland, where the scenic meadows she walks to offer an occasional respite from intense trade discussions.

Negotiations constitute the bulk of her job, and being able to think on her feet is her greatest challenge, Chatten says. "The more articulate you are, the better the job you do," she says. "You can have a position identified ahead of time. You may know the general principles you're trying to convey. But no one can script it. And when you're from the United States, every word you say, people are taking down."

Her years at Purdue, which went beyond agricultural economics to include some animal science, process engineering, and a broad interdisciplinary experience helped prepare her. "It was a foundation, working with people who have a different framework," she says. "It's very similar in the government."

1968	B.A., Political Science Mount Holyoke College
1969	M.A., Political Science, Michigan State University
1978	M.S., Economics, University of Kansas
1982	Ph.D., Agricultural Economics, Purdue University

1988-1994	Director, Uruguay Round Negotiations of Agriculture, United States Trade Representative on detail from the United States Department of Agriculture
1994-1999	Director for Tariff Affairs, Office of the United States Trade Representative
2000	Deputy Assistant United States Trade Representative, Market Access

" The real special thing about Purdue University was that I worked with folks in animal science, I sat in on a course on process engineering, I worked informally with people in other schools, so it was a broad, interdisciplinary experience, and I was able to communicate with all of them. It's very similar in the government. The folks in Treasury have a very different way of looking at things than EPA or Defense. You learn to listen. to work together, and appreciate what everyone brings. A lot of that I got from Purdue. It was a foundation, working with people who have a different framework."