Vicki Thomas Featured by Influential Women Proves Purpose Has No Expiration Date



WESTON, CT, UNITED STATES, September 16, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Redefining What It Means to Age With Purpose: Visibility, Curiosity, and Impact

WESTON, Conn. – At 80, Vicki Thomas is not slowing down – she is accelerating with purpose, influence, and an unapologetic determination to remain visible in a culture that too often sidelines older women. A pioneering marketing executive, entrepreneur, storyteller, author, and social impact leader, Vicki has spent more than five decades reinventing herself while helping others discover the power of reinvention in their own lives.

Her journey has taken her from a farm in rural Wisconsin to executive leadership in the male-dominated financial industry, from marketing and media to entrepreneurship and nonprofit advocacy, and ultimately to a new chapter focused on purposeful aging. Long after many people would consider a career complete, Vicki continues to build, create, learn, speak, write, and challenge assumptions about what life is supposed to look like after 60, 70, or 80. “I didn’t peak in my 30s or 40s. Some of my greatest purpose has emerged later in life. Society may put an expiration date on women, but purpose never does.”

The values behind that lifelong drive took root well before Vicki entered the corporate world. She grew up on a farm in rural Wisconsin, where hard work was not optional — it was simply life. At the age of 10, she joined 4-H, and looking back, she recognizes it as one of the greatest leadership training grounds she could have ever experienced. She learned how to sew, garden, care for animals, and proudly bring her horse and prize cow to the county fair. But the lessons went much deeper than those activities. She learned responsibility, resilience, community,

service, and belonging. At the beginning of every 4-H meeting, members recited a pledge centered on clearer thinking, greater loyalty, better service, and better living for their club, community, and country. Those words grounded Vicki in values that have guided her entire life, teaching her that leadership is not about status but about service, and that success is not simply personal achievement but the ability to use one's gifts to make a difference in the lives of others.

With that foundation beneath her, Vicki entered the corporate world long before women commonly held executive leadership positions. Vicki broke barriers in the 1970s as head of marketing and advertising for the Credit Union National Association, navigating a predominantly male financial industry with creativity, confidence, and strategic brilliance. Her career eventually expanded beyond one organization or industry as she fused her expertise in finance, media, communications, and consumer psychology through entrepreneurial ventures and consulting projects that helped major organizations, including American Express, Prudential Securities, and Merrill Lynch, better understand and engage women and the rapidly growing pre-retiree market. Her years with ABC Television Network deepened her mastery of storytelling, audience connection, and cultural trends – skills that would later become central to her work as an author, speaker, and advocate for purposeful aging.

As her career advanced, one of its most enduring lessons arrived unexpectedly late one night while closing the bar with the president of ABC Television Network during the Lake Placid Olympics. They had worked together years earlier at the Innsbruck Olympics in 1976, and after watching Vicki for several days, he looked at her and told her that she had changed and had lost her spark. At first, Vicki was stunned. She explained that she had a new boss and felt uncertain about her future. Then came advice that would shape the rest of her career and, honestly, her life. He told her that if she was in marketing – or any creative, visionary field – she must always be chosen and never inherited. The moment she became inherited, he explained, she would begin to lose her spark.

His observation helped Vicki understand that she was working in an environment where she was tolerated rather than truly valued. Her new boss had inherited her as part of the organization, but he had not chosen her for her ideas, instincts, energy, or vision. Over time, that slowly dimmed her confidence, creativity, and passion. The conversation became a turning point. Vicki realized how important it is to place yourself in rooms, relationships, organizations, and opportunities where people genuinely see your value and want what you uniquely bring to the table – not simply because you have always been there or because you came with the job, but because your voice, ideas, leadership, and presence matter.

The lesson stayed with Vicki, especially as she considered how often women remain in places where they are tolerated rather than valued. They can spend years trying to prove themselves worthy of staying in spaces where they are merely tolerated. Vicki believes brilliance expands when people are chosen, respected, and encouraged to fully show up as themselves. That understanding also shaped how she later led others. Whether mentoring entrepreneurs,

building nonprofit movements, creating purpose-driven communities, or collaborating with teams, she has always tried to make people feel seen, valued, and intentionally chosen.

When people feel chosen, she believes, they bring their best selves forward. Even now, at 80, Vicki continues to believe that protecting your spark matters. Your spark is your curiosity, your creativity, your voice, your courage, and your purpose. Her advice is simple: never stay anywhere – professionally or personally – that slowly asks you to dim it.

Her career also taught Vicki something many leaders never learn: facts inform, but stories transform. Storytelling became more than a professional skill; it became a way for her to inspire social change, elevate overlooked voices, and help people imagine new possibilities for themselves. She put that belief into practice through her work with Purple Heart Homes. After personally reaching out to injured Iraq veterans and co-founders John Gallina and Dale Beatty, Vicki helped transform the small nonprofit into a nationally recognized movement supporting service-connected disabled veterans with accessible housing solutions.

Through strategic media outreach, authentic storytelling, and relationship-building, she dramatically increased awareness, visibility, and fundraising support for the organization, including helping secure a landmark cover story in TIME. Her impact earned her the prestigious $100,000 Purpose Prize from Encore.org, recognizing individuals over 60 who are creating powerful social change and proving that purpose does not retire.

Her understanding of purpose deepened further when Vicki faced two life-threatening cancers. When she was diagnosed with a very rare cancer called MMMT and told she had three to five years to live, everything changed. Vicki got her affairs in order and genuinely prepared herself to die. She survived and began to rebuild her life. Then, just two years later, she was diagnosed with breast cancer. Once again, she faced fear, uncertainty, and the reality of mortality head-on. Those experiences changed Vicki profoundly. She no longer postpones joy, purpose, connection, or possibility. She often jokes that she is now living on her “bonus years,” but there is truth in that humor. Facing death stripped away the unimportant and clarified what really matters: people, purpose, contribution, love, laughter, and making every moment count. Vicki attributes her success to a combination of Midwestern grit, a deep sense of community and service instilled through 4-H, faith in reinvention, and an unwavering determination to persevere – even when life becomes unimaginably difficult.

Surviving cancer did not make her fearless; it made her more alive. It gave her the drive to keep growing, creating, contributing, and refusing to fade quietly into the background simply because society thinks women over 80 should. Vicki believes the later years of life can become some of the most meaningful years, not because life gets easier, but because people finally understand what matters most.

Those experiences now inform Vicki’s work as co-founder and Chief Purpose Officer of My Future Purpose, a platform and community designed to help people navigate reinvention, transition,

and meaningful aging. Through workshops, speaking engagements, virtual gatherings, and innovative tools such as the Pathways to Purpose workbook and card deck, she encourages people to stop asking, “What am I retiring from?” and start asking, “What am I still capable of becoming?” It is a question that reflects Vicki’s own life as much as it reflects the mission of her work. She understands that retirement can create an identity gap for people who have spent decades defining themselves through their careers, family responsibilities, or other roles. Her goal is to help people recognize that a new chapter does not have to mean a smaller life. It can mean discovering an entirely different reason to get up in the morning.

Through this work, Vicki sees an opportunity emerging that she calls the “What’s Next movement.” Millions of women, especially midlife and older women, feel stuck, restless, invisible, burned out, or uncertain about what comes after the careers, roles, and identities they have carried for decades. They are asking themselves deeply personal questions: Who am I now? What do I still have to contribute? What’s my next chapter?

My Future Purpose was created to help answer those questions. She believes purpose is not a luxury; it is essential to emotional, mental, and even physical well-being. People need a reason to get up in the morning that excites them so much they become completely engaged in living. Through workshops, conversations, tools, and community, My Future Purpose helps people discover which of its seven Pathways to Purpose best aligns with who they are now, rather than who they were 20 years ago. Sometimes purpose is entrepreneurship. Sometimes it is creativity, service, mentoring, advocacy, learning, or simply giving yourself permission to do what you want and live with joy.

This work has taken on greater urgency as the longevity revolution is creating an entirely new life stage that previous generations never had. Women are living longer, healthier, and more actively than ever before, yet society still acts as though life winds down after 60. Vicki rejects that outdated narrative. She believes some of the most impactful, creative, and liberated years can happen later in life. Her own journey has become an example of that possibility.

Vicki’s own experience as an author offers another example of later-life reinvention. Writing From Woodstock to Wisdom…A Boomer’s Journey to 80 was actually the easy part. Getting the book discovered in today’s crowded publishing and media world has been the real education. Vicki has had to learn publishing, distribution, metadata, branding, marketing, social media visibility, audiobook production, and the independent publishing ecosystem. She approached each challenge as another invitation to learn and reinvent herself. She recently made the decision to take full control of her publishing journey and move her book under her own publishing direction so she can shape its future independently. At 80, she is learning new technologies, mastering new systems, building new platforms, and proving to herself that reinvention does not have an expiration date.

As its audience has grown, the book has become more than a memoir. It has become a conversation starter, a platform, and a bridge into larger discussions about aging, purpose,

reinvention, visibility, and what Vicki calls the “Longevity Revolution.” Every story eventually leads back to one central question: What gives your life meaning now? That question is also inspiring Vicki’s next project, From Woodstock to Wisdom: Passing the Mic, where she plans to engage college students across the country in honest intergenerational conversations about the future, social responsibility, purpose, and what younger generations really think about Baby Boomers. At this stage of life, Vicki expects challenges and trusts herself to work through them.

The lessons Vicki has gathered across these reinventions also shape Vicki’s advice to young women entering the workforce. She encourages them to understand that the professional world she entered in the 1970s no longer exists in the same form. Entire careers in traditional marketing, advertising, promotion, media relations, and communications are being reinvented by artificial intelligence, automation, and digital disruption.

Vicki spent years writing press releases, cultivating relationships with reporters, pitching stories, and building campaigns through human connection and creativity. Today, AI can generate images, write copy, create marketing plans, edit videos, and design campaigns in minutes. The speed of change is breathtaking, and Vicki believes young women need to understand that they are not entering the workforce their parents entered. They are entering an entirely new economic era.

Because the employment landscape is changing so rapidly, Vicki’s advice is not simply to follow passion. Passion matters, but strategy matters too. She encourages young women to look toward fields that solve real problems and require human expertise, adaptability, and innovation, including science, technology, medicine, engineering, cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, climate solutions, and advanced manufacturing. She also believes the trades are dramatically undervalued. Skilled electricians, contractors, mechanics, healthcare technicians, and builders are increasingly indispensable in a world that still depends on human capability and practical skill.

She also encourages young women to think entrepreneurially. The old model of staying with one company for 20 or 30 years is largely gone. Vicki worked for organizations like the Credit Union National Association for years, building a long-term career inside one institution, but she recognizes that kind of stability rarely exists today. The future belongs to people who can adapt, reinvent themselves, learn continuously, and create opportunities instead of waiting for someone else to hand them one. Above all, Vicki believes women should never define themselves by a job title alone. Instead, they should build transferable skills: learning how to communicate, solve problems, lead people, think critically, and adapt to change. Technology will continue to evolve, industries will continue to disappear, and careers will continue to shift, but women who are resilient, curious, entrepreneurial, and willing to keep learning will always find a way forward.

For Vicki, the question is no longer whether there is still something ahead. The question is what comes next. At 80, she is still answering that question with action — because purpose never retires.

Learn More about Vicki Thomas:

Through her Influential Women profile, https://influentialwomen.com/connect/vicki-thomas or through My Future Purpose, https://www.myfuturepurpose.com/about-us/

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