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Patterson books hit stores

The communications unit of the Office of the Prime Minister on Wednesday launched two books, entitled *The Transforming Landscape of Jamaica* and *PJ Patterson in the Eyes of the World*, which the unit hopes will do much to enlighten local and international readers about Jamaica's political policy and Patterson's tenure.

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Charles Taylor likely to be tried in the Hague

Trial in Africa is apparently too risky for a man accused of fomenting war across west Africa — and believed to have the support and money to create more trouble. International prosecutors requested yesterday that Charles Taylor's trial for crimes against humanity be moved to The Hague.

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Patterson ends 48-year political

BY DWIGHT BELLANFANTE
Observer staff reporter

At approximately 4:50 pm yesterday, Percival James Patterson handed in his letter of resignation to Governor-General Professor Kenneth Hall at a brief ceremony in the King's House drawing room, symbolically marking the end of a long political journey, including 14 years as prime minister of Jamaica.

The resignation paved the way for history to unfold, coming 10 minutes before the ceremony to swear in the country's first woman prime minister in Portia Lucretia Simpson Miller.

When the moment came, Patterson seemed the man Jamaica had come to know — calm, poised, certain he had made the decision he wanted to make and ready to make light of a serious situation.

"I can assure you that this is the original copy," quipped Patterson before handing the envelope bearing the letter of resignation to Hall, who joked that Patterson would now be able to sleep late.

"At least in another month or so," said Hall, as Patterson acknowledged that probably would be the case.

In five minutes it was all over.

Patterson, 70, had earlier informed the *Observer* that he intended to focus on writing his memoirs and the history of the Jamaican and Caribbean people, having turned down at least five offers with

multi-lateral institutions including the United Nations (UN), wishing to benefit from his considerable experience as an international negotiator.

The brief resignation ceremony was also witnessed by incoming prime minister, Portia Simpson Miller and her husband Errald Miller; three Caribbean prime ministers — Trinidad and Tobago's Patrick Manning; Owen Arthur of Barbados; Ralph Gonsalves of St Vincent and the Grenadines, and Chief Minister Michael Misick of the Turks and Caicos; former Governor-General, Sir Howard Cooke; and Rhema Hall, wife of the present governor-general.

Patterson's resignation also brought to a close an unprecedented period as Jamaica's longest serving prime minister with 14 years unbroken service and 25 years in Parliament, during which he held more portfolios at the ministerial level than any other minister, covering tourism, mining, industry, foreign affairs, trade, finance and defence, in addition to the office of prime minister.

He will shortly resign as member of parliament for eastern Westmoreland, the last vestige of representational politics which began in 1958 when he joined Norman Manley's People's National Party as an organiser.

Revered and vilified at one and the same time, Patterson is unchallenged as Jamaica's most successful political leader electorally, having led his party to a record three victories, breaking the hitherto accepted two-term cycle and

contributing to the longest run in government of any political party in Jamaica's history — 17 years — by his PNP, now in the latter stages of a fourth term.

But the election victories belie what has at times been a tenuous period of governance, marked by a number of challenges including low economic growth; the meltdown of the financial sector in the mid-90s; a monstrous crime and violence problem marked by unchecked murders; declining values and attitudes societally; questionable issues related to a lack of governmental accountability; and latterly a serious energy crisis caused by massive world oil price increases.

At the same time, Patterson has presided over massive investment in infrastructure including quantum increases in the capacity of Jamaica's sea and airports, new highways, water systems and housing construction and land reform, as well as record foreign investment flows.

The quality of life has also improved in the eyes of many who now have far easier access to telephones, piped water, electricity and motor vehicles than 17 years ago.

Statisticians acknowledge that far more Jamaicans now attend schools and universities and that universal indicators of well being, such as the country's infant mortality rate and average life expectancy, are comparable to developed countries.

Portia pledges to advance human

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threat, as Opposition Leader Bruce Golding and his wife were missing from the proceedings, having left King's House prematurely after failing to secure seats among the thousands of guests who filled virtually every seat on the lawn. (See story on Page 4)

The former opposition leader, Edward Seaga and his wife Carla, remained to the end as they were seated in the front row beside the visiting leaders from Caricom and Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan.

Dressed in a champagne-coloured suit, Simpson Miller smiled broadly as Governor-General Kenneth Hall hailed her formally as prime minister. The announcement was greeted by a deafening roar from the large crowd, which took up every square inch of the lush, green lawn.

None of the newly elected female leaders from around the world, including Liberia's Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and Chile's Michelle Bachelet, who were listed among possible guests, were present. But the Caribbean Community (Caricom) was well represented by prime ministers Patrick Manning of Trinidad and Tobago, Owen Arthur of Barbados and Ralph Gonsalves of St Vincent and the Grenadines. A US congressional team



A section of the large crowd at King's House yesterday to witness Portia Simpson Miller being sworn in as Jamaica's first ever woman prime minister. (Photo: Bryan Cummings)

and chief minister Michael Misick of the Turks and Caicos Islands also attended.

Governor-General Hall called the event the "most momentous transition in our nation's history" and suggested that it should be regarded as a "defining moment".

Former Prime Minister Patterson said that he was particularly gratified that the country has experienced "a seamless and transparent" leadership change

which had enhanced "the best and most wholesome of our Jamaican political traditions".

Said Patterson: "I am confident that the country will be able to rise to new levels of economic growth and witness upward social mobility, as we continue to build on the foundations which have been well and truly laid."

The singing of the local gospel anthem *Can't Even Walk*, featuring former Grace

journey in five minutes



P J Patterson (right) hands his letter of resignation from the post of prime minister to Governor-General Kenneth Hall at King's House yesterday afternoon shortly before his successor, Portia Simpson Miller (2nd left) was sworn in. Witnessing the delivery of the letter are Ralph Gonsalves (3rd left), prime minister of St Vincent and the Grenadines; and Owen Arthur, prime minister of Barbados.

(Photo: Bryan Cummings)

rights and individual liberty

Thrillers lead singer Shirley Willis, supported by the Kencot Youth Choir and saxophonist Dean Fraser, heralded Simpson Miller's maiden speech as prime minister of Jamaica.

She opened with a prayer before wading into her speech, highlighting the many social and economic problems facing the country and promising not to betray the people's trust.

"The first pledge to the Jamaican people is to advance human rights and individual liberty," she said. "Each individual life is sacred. None is more important than the other. Money should not make one person more important than the other. Learning should not make one person more important than the other, nor should class, colour or gender. We are all equal in the sight of God."

In a veiled reference to brutality ascribed to the security forces, she said that while the state has a responsibility to protect society as a whole, "it must never, in the execution of that responsibility, sacrifice individual liberty".

"We cannot build the harmony and peace that this society so desperately needs unless all Jamaicans know that they will be treated with dignity and respect," she added.

She pledged to work tirelessly to eradicate corruption and extortion. "I am committed to their eradication, as I am committed to uplifting the poor," she said.

She also pledged to do everything in her power to break the power of criminals over communities.

"I will be working closely with the minister of national security, the law enforcement officers, the Opposition and our 780 identified communities to successfully tackle this problem in the interest of all Jamaicans, including those in the Diaspora who want to

see a peaceful Jamaica," said Simpson Miller.

"I believe that if we create the right conditions for people to flourish; if, as government, we see ourselves as facilitators, then we will experience the unleashing of the Jamaican creative spirit that can move this country forward," she said.

The prime minister pledged, too, to facilitate conditions for employment opportunities and wealth creation.

"I want to say directly to the private sector, both here and overseas, that we treasure the gains which have been made through our macro-economic policy and international credibility. It is our intention to build on these hard-won gains of pain and sacrifice," she said.

She promised to "balance people's lives" while balancing the books and to expand opportunities for all Jamaicans to share in the fruits of macro-economic stability.

Simpson Miller also pointed out that critical to economic transformation was the need for education transformation.

"I pledge to the people an unyielding commitment to education, including programmes in character education to build a society committed to the highest ethical principles," she added.

However, she admitted that to do this she would need to build on the legacy of co-operation between the major political parties.

She said that she would ensure that "victimisation never rears its ugly head in any way under my administration".

"I say to the Opposition, let us launch a new era of co-operation. Let us work together in the interest of all Jamaicans. Let us put the people's hopes and aspirations before our own interests," she said.

...And Portia prayed

BY TANEISHA DAVIDSON
Observer staff reporter

PORTIA Lucretia Simpson Miller set the tone for her first speech as prime minister at her swearing-in ceremony yesterday with a prayer that drew murmurs of satisfaction from among the more than 6,000 guests on the sprawling lawns of King's House.

"As I assume the office of prime minister of all of Jamaica, I do so Lord, truly conscious that the glory is Yours, and the office, an affirmation of my devotion to You and to all the people of this nation," she said in a soft, reverent voice.

"You laid the foundations of the earth. Lord, lay now, I beseech You, the foundations of the government that You have graciously enabled me to lead, so that its purpose be firm, its endeavours right, and its accomplishments blessed. Let it be joy to those through whom You dispense it; bless those who will receive it; and glory to You who give it."



Portia Simpson Miller takes the oath of office while holding the Bible.

The prayer appeared to have won the already popular Simpson Miller more admiration, if the quiet murmurs and nodding of heads were anything to go by. It was followed later by a mass choir led by former head of the Grace Thrillers Beverley Willis who belted out the popular *Can't even walk with you holding my hand*.

"She is brave," one lawyer in the crowd commented in reference to Simpson Miller's spiritual input into the auspicious programme.

About 20 minutes earlier, Jamaicans witnessed Simpson Miller's inauguration as the country's first female and seventh prime minister, as her husband Errald Miller beamed approvingly.

From as early as 3:00 pm, thousands of guests from home and abroad began to fill the seats on the lawns of King's House for the swearing-in ceremony scheduled to begin at 5:00 pm and which was beamed live on radio and television.

Simpson Miller and her husband were the first of the official party to approach the platform which was garbed with flowers and decorations bearing the national colours. They were greeted by a fanfare of trumpets as they ascended the stairs.

Dressed in a champagne skirt suit and not a strand of hair out of place, Simpson Miller glistened with pride as she greeted the audience who welcomed her with a standing ovation.

Outgoing prime minister P J Patterson and Governor-General Kenneth Hall and his wife Rhema followed.

After Professor Hall read the Instrument appointing Simpson Miller as prime minister, she took the oath of Office and oath of Allegiance, clutching the Bible in her right hand.

At approximately 5:20 pm, she signed and was presented with the Instrument of Appointment to loud cheers and applause.

The raising of Simpson Miller's standard (flag) and the lowering of Patterson's followed.

Yesterday was symbolic for Patterson as it was 14 years to the date when he was first sworn in as Jamaica's sixth prime minister at the same venue. It was also the second time that a prime minister swore an oath to the constitution, laws and people of Jamaica, instead of an oath to the Queen.

Among the persons present to witness the historic occasion were Louis Farrakhan, leader of the Nation of Islam; prime minister of Barbados, Owen Arthur; prime minister of St Vincent and the Grenadines, Dr Ralph Gonsalves; and prime minister of Trinidad and Tobago, Patrick Manning.