

BIN SIMPSON - Miller, Portia
Candidate



Portia Simpson-Miller

Prime Minister, The Hon. Portia Simpson Miller, the first female to hold this position in Jamaica, created history on Saturday, February 25, by becoming the first female President-elect of the 68 year-old People's National Party (PNP).

It was not the first time she created a first in Jamaica's political history. Thirty-two years after she first entered representational politics, she has achieved the most coveted prize in the local political arena--that of becoming Prime Minister of Jamaica.

Known for her passion for the poor and dispossessed, Mrs. Simpson Miller has, since 1989, consistently topped the opinion polls as the best performing Minister of Government and the most popular politician. Since the announcement by Prime Minister P. J. Patterson after the 2002 elections that he would be retiring before the next General Elections, opinion polls have shown that the Jamaican people have favoured her as the best person to succeed Mr. Patterson.

The November 2005 Gleaner/Don Anderson Poll showed that 58% of the Jamaican people felt she was the most suitable person to succeed Mr. Patterson, with a privately commissioned poll showing that figure jumping to approximately 62% in December 2005. She has been a Vice-President of the PNP since 1978 and President of the PNP Women's Movement since 1983.

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In 1974 when she won the tough inner-city constituency of Trench Town West as a Councilor in the Kingston & St. Andrew Corporation (KSAC) for the PNP, it was the first time that the party had won that seat. When she went on in 1976 to win the Constituency of South West St. Andrew in the Parliamentary elections, she had created another first for the party. And, when the Party suffered a massive defeat in the 1980 elections, she emerged as one of only nine PNP representatives who won their seats.

Born in humble circumstances on December 12, 1945, in Wood Hall, St. Catherine, she has never forgotten her roots, and has for decades committed herself to the mission of uplifting the poor and marginalized.

In 1977 she was appointed Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Local Government under the Michael Manley Administration, a post she held until the General Elections of 1980. Serving in the Parliamentary Opposition, she was PNP Spokesperson on Women's Affairs, Pension, Social Security and Consumer Affairs between 1983 and 1989. Returning to Government in 1989, Mrs. Simpson Miller was appointed Minister of Labour, Social Security and Sport. There, her prodigious skills in human relations and networking were evident and stood the country in good stead, as the industrial relations climate improved considerably. Those disputes which were brought to the Ministry were skillfully and expeditiously handled by her. As Minister of Labour, Social Security and Sport, Mrs. Simpson Miller took particular interest in the welfare of the country's overseas farm workers and saw to the improvement of their living standards. She brought well-needed reforms to the Overseas Farm Workers Programme and established the Overseas Recruitment Centre for Farm Workers. Significantly, she also established a Chair in Labour Relations at the University of the West Indies. Under her watch, too, a number of day-care facilities were instituted islandwide. She initiated the strategic investment of the National Insurance Fund (NIF), which resulted in growth from \$1.5 billion to \$20 billion in three years.

In the year 2000, Minister Simpson Miller was given the critical Tourism Ministry and still retained the Sport portfolio. It was during the Minister's tenure that the new Indoor Sports Facility was built and the Sports Development Foundation established. Mrs. Simpson Miller also had the unique honour of serving as Jamaica's Sport Minister when Jamaica made its historic and dramatic entry into World Cup Football. It was she who inspired the "Road to France" Campaign which galvanised the entire country in an unprecedented way. As Minister of Tourism, she had the daunting task of rebuilding the tourism industry after the 9/11 disaster in the United States. She quickly and pro-actively developed strategies which resulted in a quick resuscitation of visitor arrivals to the island, including

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new visitor arrivals from the European Market. As Minister of Tourism, too, she successfully lobbied for the resumption of flights from Martin Air and Continental Airlines to Jamaica. And it was under her tenure that the Master Plan for Tourism was completed, setting up the strategic roadmap to the country's path to sustainable tourism development.

In 2002, after the General Elections, she returned to the Local Government portfolio but now to an expanded Ministry of Local Government, Community Development and Sport. Always strong on the issue of the community being at the centre of the development thrust and on "bottom-up" development, her portfolio responsibilities were the right fit for her own philosophy of governance. So evident was her intensity for issues of local governance and local government reform, that she has been called to serve at the international level. Director of the Commonwealth Local Government Reform, she is also Vice-President of the Inter-American Network of Decentralization, Local Government and Citizens Participation (RIAD); Director of the Board of Trustees of the United Nations Centre for Local Government Training (CIFAL) and Chair of the Caribbean Local Government Ministers.

A strong believer in lifelong learning, Mrs. Simpson Miller holds the certificate in Advanced Management from the University of California at Berkeley; a Certificate of Participation in the Executive Programme for Leaders in Development at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, as well as a Certificate in Public Relations and Advanced Management from the Institute of Management and Production (IMP). Mrs. Simpson Miller also holds a Bachelor's Degree in Public Administration from Union Institute and University in Miami, Florida. She is also the recipient of an honorary doctorate from that same institution, which commended her for her "enduring efforts to improve the quality of life for all Jamaican citizens, regardless of race, class, colour and creed." Mrs. Simpson Miller received her early education at Marlie Hill Primary School and St. Martin's High School for Girls.

She is married to businessman and former Cable & Wireless Jamaica Limited top executive, Errald Miller.

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Profile of Mrs. Portia Simpson-Miller

- First Female Prime Minister of Jamaica
- First President of the People's National Party

B/N SIMPSON - Miller, Portia

- Former Minister of Tourism and Sport with responsibilities for Entertainment & Gen
- Acted in the capacity of Prime Minister on several occasions
- Vice President of the People's National Party since 1978
- Participated in First Eleanor Roosevelt Caucus of Women Political Leaders
- Participated in "Women in Leadership Conference" at the John F. Kennedy School, I
- Recipient of the Certificate for completion of the Executive Programme for Leaders
- Holder of a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Public Administration from Union Institute in
- Awarded Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters by the Union Institute
- An advocate for the poor, the dispossessed, the oppressed and all those who remain v
- Holds a steadfast vision for development and change in the Jamaican Society
- "It is often said that - " while the nation sleeps, she works."

PROFESSION

- In her business career she has worked in various positions as Secretary and in the So

POSITIONS HELD IN GOVERNMENT

- October 2002 - present, Minister of Local Government and Sport
- Feb. 21, 2000 – 2002 Minister of Tourism & Sports
- 1995 – Feb. 20, 2000 Minister of Labour, Social Security & Sports
- 1993 – 1995 Minister of Labour & Welfare
- 1989 – 1993 Minister of Labour, Welfare and Sports
- 1983 – 1989 PNP's Spokesperson on Women's affairs, Pension, Social Security and
- Parliamentary Secretary in the Office of the Prime Minister
- Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Local Government
- Member of Parliament for South West St. Andrew since 1989

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- Councillor of the KSAC in 1974 & 1976
- Sits on the Executive Council and the National Executive Council for the Party
- A PNP Vice President since 1978
- Active and leading Member of the PNP

Other profiles of Portia Simpson-Miller

Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Jamaica Information Service

The Jamaica Gleaner

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