PRIME MINISTER P.J. Patterson has appointed vice chancellor emeritus, Professor Rex Nettleford as 'special ambassador' for Jamaica.

Professor Nettleford was presented with his instrument of appointment and a new diplomatic passport at a function held in his honour at Vale Royal on Wednesday.

Prime Minister Patterson commended Professor Nettleford for the magnificent job he had done at the University of the West Indies, noting that he was the first graduate of the institution to rise to the position of vice chancellor.

In thanking the prime minister for his support, Professor Nettleford noted that the University of the West Indies has made a tremendous contribution in building the leadership of the Caribbean and bringing to the region a particular intellectual sophistication which it did not have before the university was established.

Professor Nettleford has served in numerous teaching and managerial positions at the tertiary level for 48 years, beginning as resident tutor at the Extra Mural Department. He has played a critical role in expanding the reach of the University of the West Indies and in shaping the development of adult education within the university.

He has also contributed to the development of women in the trade union movement in the region, through the introduction of the Caribbean Women in Trade Unions training programme at the Trade Union Education Institute.