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Ex-Jamaica Leader Manley Dies

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KINGSTON, Jamaica (AP) -- Michael Manley, the former prime minister who took Jamaica to the forefront of the developing world's nonaligned movement in the 1970s, has died. He was 72.

Manley died at his home Thursday night, the official Jampress news agency reported today. The cause of death was not disclosed, but Manley had been battling prostate cancer.

In a statement issued in January, Manley said he was having "some good days and some not so good days." Though confined to bed, he said he kept busy tending to public and personal affairs.

Jamaica's government radio and television stations broadcast tributes to Manley, who served three terms as prime minister.

"A giant ceases to walk the Caribbean," Antigua's Prime Minister Lester Bird said. "He was a West Indian who knew well that none of us are islands unto ourselves."

Manley's death, the same day as that of Guyana's President Cheddi Jagan, "assumes even greater proportions of tragedy," Bird said.

In his first two terms as prime minister, from 1972 until 1980, Manley was a firebrand socialist and champion of the nonaligned movement. He forged close ties with

Cuban leader Fidel Castro, railed against capitalist domination and discouraged foreign investment.

By the end of 1980, Jamaica was nearly bankrupt and Manley was defeated by conservative Edward Seaga, who became the Reagan administration's closest ally in the Caribbean.

In 1989, a new Manley emerged. The anti-imperialist rhetoric was gone, along with his trademark bush jacket. Manley espoused capitalism, private investment and good relations with the United States. Helped by a worsening economy, he trounced Seaga in national elections.

Manley said he had learned from his mistakes.

"I think there are two types of people: those who won't learn and those who try to," he said. "I try to learn."

But he never toned down his tendency to speak out when he felt it was necessary.

After the U.S. invasion of Panama in December 1989, Manley surprised some U.S. officials during a visit by Vice President Dan Quayle to quell unease in the region over the military action.

Manley said ousted Panamanian Gen. Manuel Antonio Noriega had "raped democracy," but he told Quayle he disagreed with the invasion because the United States had to respect the sovereignty of other nations.

Charismatic, tall and handsome, Manley was a powerful orator often called "Joshua," after the Old Testament prophet.

Michael Norman Manley was born Dec. 10, 1924, the son of Norman Washington Manley, who founded Jamaica's social democratic People's National Party, and Edna Swithenbank, a noted sculptor.

He graduated from Jamaica College in 1943 and served in the Royal Canadian Air Force until the end of World War II. He obtained an economics degree at the London

School of Economics and spent a year as a freelance journalist for the British Broadcasting Corp. In the early 1950s, he became involved in Jamaica's trade union movement.

Manley was given an appointed senator's seat in 1962 and was elected to parliament in 1967. He succeeded his father as PNP president in 1969.

Manley defeated the Labor Party to become prime minister in 1972 and was re-elected in 1976.

Citing health reasons, Manley quit as prime minister on March 28, 1992, and was succeeded by P.J. Patterson.

"Michael Manley will always be remembered for his passionate fight for social equity and justice and his commitment to the upliftment of the less fortunate in the society," Patterson said today.

In addition to his wife, Glynne, Manley is survived by two sons and three daughters. Funeral arrangements were pending.

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