

René Préval

President of Haiti

Born on Jan. 17, 1943, in Port-au-Prince, René Préval holds a degree in agronomy from the College of Gembloux in Belgium and has a background in engineering and geothermics.

In 1963, Mr. Préval and his family were forced to leave Haiti after they were targeted by dictator Jean-Claude “Papa Doc” Duvalier. Returning to Haiti in 1975, Mr. Préval obtained a position with the National Institute of Mineral Resources.

Mr. Préval served as Prime Minister for eight months in 1991 until a military coup forced him to seek refuge at the French and Mexican embassies in Port-au-Prince. He joined the exiled constitutional government from 1992 to 1994 in Washington.

Mr. Préval was sworn in as President of Haiti on Feb. 7, 1996.

Mr. Préval is married and has two children.

Percival James Patterson

Prime Minister of Jamaica

Percival James Patterson was born in 1935. He graduated from the University of the West Indies, at Mona, in 1958 with a bachelor’s degree in English. He studied law at the London School of Economics, graduating in 1963. Called to the English bar in 1963 and admitted to the Jamaican bar later that year, Mr. Patterson was appointed Queen’s Counsel in 1984.

Mr. Patterson was first elected to Parliament in 1970. He has held a number of cabinet posts, including foreign affairs and finance. First appointed Prime Minister in 1992 after his election as president of the People’s National Party, Mr. Patterson was returned to office following national elections in 1993 and 1997.

Currently chair of the G-15, Mr. Patterson is a former chair of the Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM), where he directed an initiative that helped diffuse a tense political situation in Guyana.

Mr. Patterson has two children.