

Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf



Passion or Profession: President

Period: 1938–

Born in Monrovia, Ellen Johnson left Liberia after secondary school to study at U.S. universities, including Harvard. She returned to her homeland in the 1970s to take the position of finance minister under President William Tolbert, Jr. She later worked as an economist for the World Bank and as an official with the UN Development Program. She lost to Charles Taylor in a 1997 presidential election but defeated George Weah in 2005. In January 2006, Johnson-Sirleaf was sworn in as president, becoming the first woman to be elected as an African head of state.