

# H.E. Dr. Vaira Vīķe-Freiberga, President of the Republic of Latvia

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Born in Rīga, Latvia, on December 1, 1937, grew up in refugee camps in Germany, went to school in French Morocco, University studies in Canada (B.A. and M.A., Univ. of Toronto, Ph.D., McGill Univ.). Retired as professor emerita from the Université de Montréal in 1998, after being a professor of psychology there since 1965. On May 10, 2000 received an honorary degree from Victoria University in the University of Toronto, on September 28, 2000 an honorary degree from University of Latvia, on April 29, 2002 received an honorary degree from Kaunas Vytautas Magnus University. On June 14, 2002 received an honorary degree from McGill University of Montreal. Appointed Director of the newly created Latvian Institute in Rīga by the Prime Minister of Latvia in Fall 1998. Elected President of the Republic of Latvia on June 17, 1999. Assumed a four year term as Head of State on July 8, 1999. Re-elected as President of the Republic of Latvia for another four years with 88 votes for and 6 against on June 20, 2003.

**Administrative experience:** Past president of the Canadian Psychological Association, the Social Science Federation of Canada and the Association for the Advancement of Baltic Studies (USA). Served as Vice-chairman of the Science Council of Canada (a Governor-General-in-council appointment) and chaired the Human Factors Panel of the NATO Science programme as its Canadian representative. Currently the President of the Académie des lettres et des sciences humaines of the Royal Society of Canada (Canada's National Academy).

**Honours and distinctions:** Appointed to the Council of Women World Leaders (Harvard University, 1999) Elected Full Member of the Latvian Academy of Sciences (1999), Grand Medal (1997) of the Latvian Academy of Sciences, the Pierre Chauveau medal for distinguished work in the humanities (1995) from the Royal Society of Canada, the Latvian Three-Star Order (1995), a Killam Research Fellowship (The Canada Council) 1993-1995, the Marcel-Vincent prize and medal (1992) for distinguished work in the Social Sciences from ACFAS (Association canadienne française pour l'avancement des sciences), an LL.D. (1991) from Queen's University (Canada), the Social Science Prize from the World Association of Free Latvians (Washington, D.C.) (1989), the Anna Ābele prize in Latvian philology (1979).

**Publications:** eight books including Linguistics and Poetics of Latvian Folk Songs (McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989), Latvian Sun-songs (with Imants Freibergs, 1988). La fréquence lexicale des mots au Québec (1974). In Latvian: The Warm Sun (2002), The Chronological Sun (1999), The Cosmological Sun (1997), Against the Current (1995; 1993), On the Amber Mountain (1993; 1989). Co-author of several data bases of Latvian folk songs. Over 160 book chapters and articles in English, French and Latvian, some translated into Swedish, Polish, Russian and Lithuanian. Over 250 scholarly papers, speeches and allocutions in English, French and Latvian in Europe, Australia and the Americas.

**Community service:** regular lecturer, director and president of the Board of directors of the Latvian Cultural Heritage Seminars "Divreizdivi" for university level participants (1965-1985) held in Canada, the USA, Venezuela and Brazil. Lecturer and workshop co-leader at Latvian Cultural Heritage Seminars "Trīsreiztrīs" (continuing education for families) since 1989, in Latvia and in the USA.

Married in 1960 to Imants Freibergs, professor of computer science at the University of Quebec in Montreal (UQAM). Two grown children: a son Kārlis, who has been living in Latvia since 1989, and a daughter Indra, working in Latvian Investment and Development Agency.