

**Surangel S. Whipps Jr.**  
Honorary Doctor of Laws  
August 7, 2022



Surangel S. Whipps Jr. was inaugurated as the 10th president of the Republic of Palau in 2021. He has exemplified a commitment to the Palauan people throughout his life and has worked to put their needs first during his presidency.

Whipps was born in Baltimore, Maryland, the eldest of four children, to Rekemesik Surangel and Marilyn Whipps. At age 4, his family returned to Palau and it became his home. His early life was dedicated to his family's business, Surangel and Sons Company, which provides goods and services throughout the islands. He went on to become CEO and president, leading its expansion from a one-floor store with 50 employees to a diversified company that now employs over 600 people.

Surangel Jr. obtained a Bachelor of Science in business administration from Andrews University and an MBA from Anderson Graduate School of Management at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA).

Whipps has served on various community and non- and semi-governmental organizations, growing his broad knowledge and vision for the Palauan nation. His first position within the national government was as special assistant on economic matters and foreign policy to the late President Ngiratkel Etpison.

Beginning in 2009, he was appointed senator in the 8th and 9th Olbiil Era Kelulau (OEK, Palau National Congress). Throughout his two terms, Whipps advocated for policies that promoted and protected the best interests of his people, pushing for transparency and accountability in the delivery of government services. He is best known for spearheading a bill that became law to increase minimum wage throughout the country.

In 2021, Whipps won the presidential race with a vision of improving the quality of life and happiness of the Palauan people. His slogan, "A Kot a Rechad er Belau" (Palauan People First) originated with his father, Rekemesik Surangel Whipps, who inspired his advocacy for the conservation and transformation of Palau. One of Whipps' policy priorities as president is the development and promotion of human resources. His goal is to foster the Palauan economy, while also protecting the natural environment.

As a Seventh-day Adventist, Whipps has intentionally maintained the tenets passed on to him by his parents, prioritizing a Christ-centered home, time with his family, and the values of hard work and educational achievement. He is active in his local church as head elder and serves as a member of the Palau SDA School Board, the Executive Committee of the Guam Micronesia Mission and the Guam SDA Clinic. Whipps married Valerie Esang Remengesau in 1999 and they are proud parents to three daughters, Moded, Ultei and Ngederong, and a son, Surangel Arthur.

For his faithful Christian commitment and his innovative and ethical leadership of the Republic of Palau, Andrews University takes great pleasure in honoring Surangel S. Whipps Jr. with the degree Doctor of Laws, *honoris causa*.