**PROFILE OF RONNIE BISSESSAR, TRINIDAD & TOBAGO**

***Head of Chambers of Lawgivers and Health Policy and Governance Specialist***

Mr. Ronnie Bissessar is the President of the Trinidad and Tobago Heart Foundation which was incorporated on 17th April 1998 as a not for profit Foundation to create awareness of heart health, healthy lifestyles and proper dietary habits in an effort to reduce the incidence of heart disease and stroke.



Mr. Bissessar is also the Deputy Chair and a Director of the Trinidad and Tobago Non-Communicable Diseases Alliance established in 2016 (comprising twelve (12) NCD organizations) whose principal mandate is preventing and controlling NCD’s in Trinidad and Tobago including diabetes, cardiovascular disease, cancer, chronic lung disease and mental health by harnessing the individual resources of the member party and, through joint patient advocacy, achieving universal access to health services for the early detection, treatment and rehabilitation of persons suffering with NCD’s in Trinidad and Tobago and the Caribbean.

Mr. Bissessar is also a Director of the Healthy Caribbean Coalition (HCC) based in Barbados as well as a Director of the Inter-American Heart Foundation (IAHF) based in Texas, USA.

Mr. Bissessar is an Attorney at Law in private practice and is Head of Chambers of Lawgivers which is his own Law Firm; he is also a Mediator (Civil Non-Family Matters) certified by the Mediation Board of Trinidad and Tobago and the University of Windsor Faculty of Law and serves, from time to time, as an Arbitrator.

Mr. Bissessar is a former Vice President of the Assembly of Southern Lawyers (Trinidad and Tobago) and Past President of the Rotary Club of San Fernando South (Trinidad and Tobago) and has received a Paul Harris Fellow which is Rotary’s highest honour. Mr. Bissessar has served in numerous leadership capacities with non-governmental organisations, charities and philanthropic groups.

In May 2022 Mr. Bissessar was appointed to the Board of Directors of the University of the West Indies’ Development and Endowment Fund (UWIDEF) which raises funds ($31M at present) for bursaries and scholarships for deserving Caribbean students to attend the University of the West Indies (UWI) which is the premier regional university in the top 5% of all Universities worldwide in terms of academic rankings and scholastic achievements.

Mr. Bissessar has been, for over twenty (20) years, firstly, a Junior and now a Senior Ordinary Member of the Council of the Law Association (which governs the Legal Profession in Trinidad and Tobago) and is a former Chairman (and now Director) of the Caribbean Corporate Governance Institute which is a not for profit Foundation whose principal objective is to encourage corporate governance best practices regionally; Mr. Bissessar is co-founder of the Trinidad and Tobago Legal Network which promotes and provides continuing legal education to members of the legal profession.

Mr. Bissessar has presented Papers on Health Policies and Health Governance regionally (most recently in March 2019 for members of the Healthy Caribbean Coalition on *Conflicts of Interest*). He has also assisted the IAHF with the preparation and roll out of its Conflicts of Interest and Governance Protocols.

Mr. Bissessar has lectured extensively in Business Law at the Arthur Lok Jack Global School of Business (UWI) as well as on Corporate Practice and Procedure at the Hugh Wooding Law School (the regional Law School). Mr. Bissessar has also presented scholarly papers on Corporate Governance for the Barbados Law Association and the Barbados Stock Exchange; he is also an External Examiner of the University of the West Indies.

Mr. Bissessar is a Barrister-at-Law (the Honourable Society of Lincoln’s Inn in the United Kingdom) with a commercial and public law practice and he has represented the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago in contentious proceedings involving the Caricom Commission at the Caribbean Court of Justice. He practices extensively in commercial law with particular reference to liquidations, insolvencies and receivership.

In 1985 Mr. Bissessar was awarded the Bachelor of Science Degree (Hons.) in Economics from the University of the West Indies and in 1988 was awarded an LL B (Hons.) from the University of London. In 1993 he received the Legal Education Certificate from the Hugh Wooding Law School.

In 1997 Mr. Bissessar was appointed Chairman of the South-West Regional Health Authority (in charge of national medical services at three (3) principal hospitals, three (3) research facilities and twenty-seven (27) health centres serving approximately 600,000 persons comprising 45% of the population in Trinidad and Tobago) and he has been involved in health policy formulation and health governance at the highest levels with particular reference to NCDs and heart health.

Mr. Bissessar is married to Dr. Sabita Harrikissoon and they have two children, Sveva (15) and Seth (8).

## EDUCATION

* In 1975 I was awarded a Scholarship to Presentation College, San Fernando (Trinidad and Tobago)
* On 14th June 1985 I was awarded a Bachelor of Science (B.Sc) Degree (Economics) from the University of the West Indies
* On 01st August 1988 I was awarded a Bachelor of Laws (LL.B) Degree from the University of London
* On 21st November 1989 I was Admitted to Practice as a Barrister-at-Law by the Honourable Society of Lincoln’s Inn in the United Kingdom
* On 20th May 1993 I was awarded the Legal Education Certificate from the Council of Legal Education, Hugh Wooding Law School
* On 02nd July 1993, I was Admitted to Practice as an Attorney at Law in Trinidad and Tobago
* In 2000 I was certified as a Mediator by the University of Windsor Faculty of Law
* In 2014 I was certified as a Mediator by the Mediation Board of Trinidad and Tobago

## Health policy and governance

* Chairman of the South-West Regional Health Authority (1997-2001)
* President of the Trinidad and Tobago Heart Foundation (2004 – present)
* Director of the Inter-American Heart Foundation (based in Texas, USA) (2018 – present)
* Director of the Healthy Caribbean Coalition (based in Barbados) (2019 – present)
* Director and Deputy Chair of the Trinidad and Tobago Non-Communicable Diseases Alliance (2018 – present)

## OTHER APPOINTMENTS

* Between 1995 – present I have served as a Junior and then Senior Ordinary Member of the Law Association of Trinidad and Tobago
* Between 1996 – present I have served as a Director and President of the Rotary Club of San Fernando South and received a Paul Harris Fellow which is Rotary’s highest honour
* Between 1998 – 2002 I served as a Director of the National Telecoms Company of Trinidad and Tobago (Telecommunications Services of Trinidad and Tobago)
* Between 2005 – 2008 I served as Vice President of the Assembly of Southern Lawyers
* In 2006 - 2008 I served as a Game Warden in Trinidad and Tobago
* Between 2007 - 2020 I served as a Lecturer/Presenter in Corporate Practice and Procedure at the Hugh Wooding Law School
* In 2007 I served as the Secretary of the San Fernando Yacht Club
* Between 2008-2016 I lectured in Business Law at the Arthur Lok Jack Global School of Business (UWI)
* Between 2012 – present I served as an External Examiner of the University of the West Indies
* Between 2012 – present I served as Chairman (and now Director) of the Caribbean Corporate Governance Institute (a non-profit regional foundation promoting best practice Corporate Governance)
* Between 2013 – 2016 I served as the Secretary and a Director of the Prestige Past Students Foundation (a non-profit company) comprising the alumnae of Presentation College, San Fernando
* Between May 2022 – present I served as Director of the University of the West Indies’ Development and Endowment Fund

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| private LAW practice |
| * Head of Chambers, Lawgivers * Represented the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago in the Caribbean Court of Justice in claims brought by the Competition Commission (2014) * Corporate Law including Insolvencies and Winding Ups; advising on Directors’ duties under the Companies Act Chapter 81:01 and all aspects of Corporate Governance * Commercial Conveyancing including rent reviews; preparation of commercial and residential leases; preparation of contracts and advising on commercial disputes * Insurance and Banking Law including appointments as Arbitrator * Public Law including all aspects of Constitutional Law and Judicial Review * Appointed as Junior Counsel to the Commission of Enquiry into the Paria Divers Tragedy (April 2022) |