

SA profs win lifetime achievement award

TWO leading South African researchers have been honoured with a lifetime achievement award for their contributions to the global Aids response.

Professor Salim Abdool Karim, the director of the Centre for the Aids Programme of Research in South Africa (Caprisa), and Professor Quarraisha Abdool Karim, its associate scientific director, will be presented with the esteemed Institute for Human Virology Lifetime Achievement Award for their exceptional public service.

The prestigious award will be presented by Dr Robert Gallo, who discovered HIV as the cause of Aids, at the 19th International meeting of the institute today in Baltimore in the US.

“To me, both of these renowned individuals have made some of the greatest contributions in the history of HIV/Aids in public health and epidemiology relevant to prevention and care of infected people,” said Gallo.

The Abdool Karims are professors in the field of epidemiology at Columbia University, New York, and are honorary academics at the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

They are renowned for their tireless and distinguished scientific contributions in HIV prevention and treatment research, which span nearly three decades.

“I don’t know any person or persons who have done more to advance the proper care of



Professors Quarraisha Abdool Karim and Salim Abdool Karim

people with HIV infection or the prevention of HIV infection among a population,” said Gallo.

Their scientific contributions have focused on trying to prevent HIV in women in Africa. They were the first to demonstrate that antiretrovirals could prevent sexual transmission of HIV in 2010, when sharing the results of the Caprisa 004 tenofovir gel trial.

Their landmark Caprisa 004 study was recognised by the journal *Science* as one of the top 10 scientific breakthroughs in 2010.

They also discovered that tenofovir gel prevents genital herpes, the first drug shown to be effective against this disease. Currently, they are involved in developing new innovative ways of preventing HIV in women.

Commenting on the global award for distinguished public service, the Abdool Karims said they “were deeply appreciative of the recognition by the institute, a centre of excellence in HIV research”. – Mercury Reporter