

Top award for SA Aids team

By **BONGANI MTHETHWA**

● South Africa's leading Aids researchers, professors Salim and Quarraisha Abdool Karim, have scooped the esteemed Institute for Human Virology lifetime achievement award for their contributions to the global Aids response.

The prestigious award will be presented by HIV research pioneer Robert Gallo at the 19th international meeting of the Institute for Human Virology in Baltimore today.

“To me, both these renowned individuals have made some of the greatest contributions in the history of HIV/Aids in public health and epidemiology,” said Gallo in a statement.

Quarraisha, an infectious disease epidemiologist, said they were “deeply appre-

ciative of the recognition”.

Salim, who is widely recognised for his ground-breaking scientific contributions in HIV prevention and treatment, said: “We accept the award not just on our own behalf, but in recognition of the contributions of thousands of South Africans.”

They were the first to demonstrate that antiretrovirals can prevent sexual transmission of HIV in 2010.

The scientific couple also discovered that the tenofovir gel prevents genital herpes, the first drug shown to be effective against this disease.

Both are professors of epidemiology at Columbia University in New York and are honorary academics at the University of KwaZulu-Natal.