

Aids researchers lauded

SOUTH Africa's status as a forerunner in the fight against Aids has been boosted with the naming of leading Aids researchers professors Salim Abdool Karim and Quarraisha Abdool Karim as recipients of the esteemed Institute for Human Virology (IHV) lifetime achievement award for exceptional public service for their contributions to the global Aids response.

The prestigious award was presented by Dr Robert Gallo, who discovered HIV as the cause of Aids, at the 19th international meeting of the IHV on October 25 in Baltimore, US.

Salim is the director of the Centre for Aids Programme of Research in South Africa (Caprisa) while Quarraisha is its associate scientific director.

"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 rel-

evant to prevention and care of infected people," Dr Gallo said.

"I don't know any person or persons who have done more to advance the proper care of people with HIV infection or the prevention of HIV infection among a population."

Their scientific contributions have focused on trying to prevent HIV in women in Africa. They were the first to demonstrate that antiretrovirals (ARVs) can prevent sexual transmission of HIV in 2010, when they shared the results of the Caprisa 004 tenofovir gel trial. The landmark 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 the disease.

Currently, they are involved in developing new innovative ways of preventing HIV in women.



PRESTIGE: Professors Quarraisha Abdool Karim and Salim Abdool Karim, received the Institute for Human Virology's lifetime achievement award.

"We accept the award, not just on our own behalf but in recognition of the resilience and contributions of the thousands of South Africans who have been

central, as participants in the research, to the ongoing effort to develop better and more effective HIV prevention and treatment strategies," Salim said.