

Rhodes to honour top HIV/Aids researcher Karim

Herald Reporter

Rhodes University will confer an honorary Doctor of Science (DSc) degree on acclaimed epidemiologist professor Quarraisha Abdool Karim next week.

Karim is well-known for her research on preventing HIV infection in adolescent girls and young women.

Co-founder of the Centre for the Aids Programme of Research in SA (Caprisa), Karim demonstrated for the first time that antiretrovirals could prevent HIV infection.

The findings were highlighted by the journal *Science* as one of the top 10 scientific breakthroughs in 2010.

Aside from her professional work as the associate scientific director at Caprisa, the Durban-born mother is a professor in clinical epidemiology at Columbia University and pro-vice-chancellor of African Health at the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

Karim has played a central role in building the science base in Southern Africa through the Columbia University-Southern African Fogarty Aids International Training and Research Programme, which has trained more than 600 scientists on the subcontinent.



INTERNATIONALLY ACCLAIMED:
Centre for the Aids Programme of Research in SA co-founder
Quarraisha Abdool Karim

The SA National Research Foundation A1-rated scientist is also an elected member of the National Academy of Medicine (US) and a fellow of The World Academy of Sciences, Royal Society of SA, Academy of Science of SA and the African Academy of Science.

Karim's scientific contributions in highlighting the vulnerability of young women, the need for women-initiated technologies and the integration of HIV-prevention efforts into sexual reproductive health services have earned her more than 40 SA and international awards.

These include SA's highest honour, the Order of Mapungubwe, from the president, the

apex TWAS-Lenovo Prize from The World Academy of Sciences and John Dirks Canada Gairdner Award for Global Health.

Rhodes University vice-chancellor Professor Sizwe Mabizela said SA was privileged to have a scientist of Karim's calibre who was expanding the frontiers of knowledge in a manner that made real, tangible and meaningful change in the lives of ordinary people of our country.

"We all owe professor Abdool Karim an unpayable debt of gratitude and appreciation for her immense and sustained contribution to the work that has saved many lives and has significantly improved the quality of life for those infected and affected by HIV in our country and beyond," Mabizela said.

Karim, who holds honorary degrees from the University of Johannesburg (2017) and the University of Stellenbosch (2020), has 300 peer-reviewed publications and has edited and contributed to several books and chapters, including co-editing the 6th and 7th editions of the Oxford Textbook on Global Public Health.

She will be honoured during Rhodes University's graduation ceremony on April 8.