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BALTIMORE, February 12, 2009 – Dr. Robert C. Gallo, Director of the Institute of Human Virology (IHV) of the University of Maryland School of Medicine and co-discoverer of the HIV virus, today was named the recipient of the 2009 Governor's International Leadership Award. Dr. Gallo will be honored at the World Trade Center Institute's prestigious gala held Thursday, March 12 at the Jim Rouse Visionary Arts Museum in Baltimore.

The Governor's International Leadership Award, the most esteemed international award bestowed by Maryland, recognizes decades of sustained and exemplary global leadership of those providing a significant positive impact on Maryland and its global footprint. This includes innovative methods, determination, creativity and dedication impacting an industry on a global level. Annually, nominations are submitted and one Marylander is selected as the recipient. The award will add to a lengthy list of international acknowledgements Dr. Gallo has received for his contributions in the field of medicine.

"I am privileged to honor Dr. Gallo and the Institute for Human Virology for their dedication in resolving some of the most challenging medical problems facing people worldwide, and helping to find a vaccine that can help thousands of people affected by the HIV/AIDS epidemic," said Governor Martin O'Malley. "Marylanders have long known that our state is a world leader in biotechnology, and Dr. Gallo has made substantial contributions to our state's position in this industry." According to Deborah Kielty, President & Executive Director at the World Trade Center Institute "This will be the first year that the Maryland Governor's Award for International Leadership is given to a leader in the life sciences arena, a reflection of Maryland's renowned global standing in health care."

Dr. Gallo established world fame nearly twenty-five years ago upon co-discovering HIV as the cause of AIDS. He spent 30 years at the National Cancer Institute and was the most referenced scientist in the world in the 1980's – 1990's before tackling a new vision: a first-of-its-kind institute assembling a world-class team of researchers, scientists and physicians all specializing in viral disorders. These pioneers in each of their dedicated fields would work side-by-side to speed the pace of discovery in a global effort to halt the worst epidemic and deadliest disease in medical history. Gallo's vision came to life in 1996 when IHV opened its doors.

"During my time in Maryland and at the IHV, I have worked closely with the state and City of Baltimore to ensure continued cutting-edge research in HIV and AIDS," said Dr. Gallo. "I am honored to receive this distinguished award and look forward to contributing more to the science of HIV and AIDS with the support of the Governor, the World Trade Center Institute and the University of Maryland School of Medicine.

"IHV was founded as a partnership between the state of Maryland, the City of Baltimore, the University System of Maryland and the University of Maryland Medical System. Under Dr. Gallo's direction, IHV quickly became regarded as one of the world's premier research and development operations, serving patients and scientists locally, nationally and globally. In less than 12 years the Institute's staff has grown from 50 to 300, the patient-base has grown from 200 patients in Baltimore to approximately 5,000 Baltimoreans and 250,000 Africans, and its budget has increased to \$104 million.

IHV continues to spearhead international research and education outreach efforts since its inception. It has international collaborations in North, Central and South America, Europe, and are establishing vaccine research infrastructure and treatment/intervention programs in numerous African countries. Dr. Gallo himself notes, "success will be achieved only through partnerships, teamwork and international collaboration."

"Throughout his storied career and to this day, Dr. Gallo's research has brought his colleagues, the U.S. and IHV international recognition as well as election to the U.S. National Academy of Sciences and the Institute of Medicine. He has been awarded numerous honorary doctorates from universities all over the world and also has the distinction of twice winning America's most prestigious award – the Albert Lasker Award in Medicine. Gallo is the author of nearly 1,200 scientific publications and holds a spot in the Inventors Hall of Fame.

On May 9-11, the University of Maryland School of Medicine and the National Cancer Institute will co-host a symposium entitled, "25 Years After Discovering HIV as the Cause of AIDS." The symposium will look back at the origins of research on human retroviruses and the 25 years since proving HIV as the cause of AIDS, summarize the accomplishments of a successful research enterprise, and look forward to overcoming obstacles in treatment and prevention for the global AIDS epidemic. Additionally, a Gala, "Celebrating a Visionary's Quest for Discovery: An Evening Honoring Robert C. Gallo, MD," will be held on Saturday night, May 9, 2009. The gala will bring together colleagues, dignitaries, and friends from around the world to celebrate Dr. Gallo's discoveries and his ongoing HIV and AIDS research he conducts here in Maryland.

About the International Leadership Awards Event:

Date:

March 12, 2009 Time: 5:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

Location: Jim Rouse Visionary Center, a part of the American Visionary Arts Museum,
800 Key Highway,
Baltimore, MD 21230

Refreshments/Caribbean International Buffet and Music Celebration

See wtci.org for tickets and details

About WTCI: Established in Baltimore in 1989 to help connect Maryland to the globe, today the World Trade Center Institute (WTCI) is the region's premier private sector international business partner. Financed jointly by area businesses and the State of Maryland, WTCI operates as a non-profit membership organization. For more information visit www.wtci.org

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