Raymond Schinazi Distinguished Lectureship

“Virus Epidemics with Special Emphasis on HIV and AIDS: Reflections on the Past and Prospects for the Future”

Time and Date:
Thursday, 01 September, 2016
4:00p

Featured Speaker:
Robert C. Gallo, MD
The Homer & Martha Gudelsky Distinguished Professor in Medicine
Director, Institute of Human Virology
University of Maryland School of Medicine
Co-Founder & Scientific Director, Global Virus Network

Location:
Health Sciences Research Building Auditorium
1760 Haygood Drive
Atlanta GA 30322

With light refreshments and a concert performance by the Emory University Vega String Quartet following the lecture at 5:30p

Biography:
Few scientists have earned the fame of Robert Gallo, MD, co-discoverer of HIV as the cause of AIDS, pioneer of the HIV-screening test, and the first to identify that HIV/AIDS infections are slowed by immune system compounds called chemokines.

Gallo’s work enabled physicians to diagnose HIV/AIDS more quickly, protect patients receiving blood transfusions, and prolong the lives of those infected with the disease. It also transformed how the scientific and medical communities think about the cause, prevention, and treatment of cancer and herpes.

Dr. Gallo is founding director of the Institute of Human Virology (IHV) at the University of Maryland School of Medicine. Thirty years after his discoveries revolutionized HIV/AIDS research and treatment, still chief among Gallo’s pursuits is finding a cure and a vaccine for the deadly disease and putting an end to the AIDS pandemic. It’s why he established the IHV, the first U.S. center to combine research, patient care, and prevention programs in an effort to accelerate the pace of progress. (The institute also researches Hepatitis C, herpes, and virus-associated cancers.) Its unique multi-disciplinary approach allows IHV’s 70-plus scientists to fast-track research from concept to clinical trial in less than 18 months. That speed is life-saving for its patients, now numbering 5,500 in Baltimore and, over the last 10 years, close to 1 million in seven African and two Caribbean countries. Since its founding, the institute has been credited with several discoveries, 21 of which have been awarded patents. Gallo attributes some of this success to the support IHV has received from the University of Maryland, Baltimore. “I think we get every opportunity here,” he says, including supportive leadership and productive collaborations with other University institutes and schools. “The approach we’re taking is different,” says Gallo of the institute’s attempt to develop a vaccine against HIV. “It’s not way different, but different enough.”

A life of virus research has led Gallo to yet another undertaking. In 2011, he co-founded the Global Virus Network, a one-of-a-kind coalition of the world’s best medical virologists working together to better understand the viruses that kill millions of people each year, to develop therapies and vaccines to prevent illness and death, and to defend our global community against new viral pandemic threats.

The zeal Gallo has for his work extends throughout his life, from his love of family to his passion for history and traveling. “To sit and have dinner with close colleagues and friends in different parts of the world and talk and learn,” Gallo reflects, “are there many things more fulfilling?” Ever the scientist, Gallo will keep experimenting to find out.