

## And the Da Vinci Award Goes to Dr. Robert C. Gallo

I. I. (January 15, 2016)



Tuesday, January 12, 2016, was the occasion for a unique and singular presentation ceremony, as Dr. Robert C. Gallo, Director of the Institute of Human Virology and Professor of Medicine at the University of Maryland School of Medicine, received the coveted Leonardo da Vinci Award for 2015 from the now 40-year-old Italian Heritage and Culture Committee-NY, Inc. (IHCC-NY, Inc.) The event took place at the Consulate General of Italy in New York City, in cooperation with the Office of the Consul General, under the auspices of Minister Natalia Quintavalle.

The Italian Heritage & Culture Committee, about to celebrate its 40th anniversary, presented Dr. Robert C. Gallo, Director of the Institute of Human Virology and Professor of Medicine at the University of Maryland School of Medicine, with the Leonardo da Vinci Award.

Dr. Gallo, whose paternal family originated Revello, Cuneo, while his family on the maternal side migrated from Celenza Valfortore near Foggia, is today renowned for his world-wide research and study in the field of immunology, which has brought about such discoveries as the second known



retrovirus (HTLV-2) and provided the first results to show that HIV caused AIDS, has continued his research throughout the years.

Recognized with some 32 honorary doctorates, he is a member of the U.S. National Academy of Sciences and Institute of Medicine, and has been ranked as the third in the world for scientific impact for the period 1983-2002.

"Dr. Gallo is certainly a personality of exceptional qualities; the way he narrated his life and experiences has been particularly fascinating, down to the technical details that he has presented in a comprehensible way to all of us. This is the best way to show the world the importance of science and technology" Consul General Natalia Quintavalle

explains.

Introducing Dr. Gallo at the ceremony, Joseph Sciamè, president/chair of the IHCC-NY, Inc., stated: "We are so very proud that Dr. Gallo has accepted our invitation for this da Vinci Award. As our thematic celebrations annually recognize such personages, for 2015 in conjunction with the Milan EXPO, a decision was reached by the Board of Directors of the IHCC-NY, Inc. to recognize someone in the field of science who excelled far beyond our expectations. Dr. Gallo is such a The Award named in honor of Leonardo da Vinci, a legendary Italian Renaissance polymath, who was considered a painter, sculptor, architect, musician, scientist, and more, has been described as the archetype of the Renaissance, a man of unquestionable curiosity".

"We thought the link with Leonardo da Vinci was perfect with his personality and skills and the field of immunology. This is an incredible Honoree for him and we couldn't be more proud of this. As I said before Mr. Gallo is truly an hero and it would be my hope, my wish, my desire that young people in America would learn about this man: it has been 35 years since the first AIDS was detected when the first person died. Young people need to be awareness about science and technology". Explained to i-Italy Mr. Joseph Sciamè.

Over the 40-year span of the IHCC-NY, Inc., others have been recognized for their respective talents related to the year's theme and include: Playwright Mario Fratti, Astronaut Michael Massimino, Former NY State First Lady Matilda Cuomo, and most recently named NYS Poet Laureate Emeritus Joseph Tusiani, and others.

Sciamè further stated: "There is little doubt that Dr. Gallo has fulfilled the criteria, for he is unquestionably a person of tremendous contribution to the human condition and a most worthy da Vinci Awardee." "As an American of Italian descent I really appreciated this humanistic award because linked with an incredible man like Leonardo Da Vinci, a polimath, painter, inventor. It's incredible to see the enthusiastic people all around me tonight" Dr. Gallo explained to us.

Following the presentation of the award, at a private invitational, a reception was held at the Consulate, where some 100 guests and dignitaries saluted and hailed the achievements of Dr. Gallo.

For further information re the IHCC-NY, Inc., please refer to [www.italyculturemonth.org](http://www.italyculturemonth.org) [2].

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