

Biography: Prof Glenda Gray

Prof Glenda Gray, MB BCh, FCPaed (SA), DSc (honoris causa, Simon Fraser University 2013), DSc (honoris causa, Stellenbosch University 2018), Honorary Doctorate in Law (Rhodes University, 2019), and an NRF A-rated scientist, is the first female President and CEO of the South African Medical Research Council.

Prof Gray, who trained as a medical doctor and paediatrician at the University of the Witwatersrand, co-founded and led the internationally renowned Perinatal HIV Research Unit, based at the Chris Hani Baragwanath Hospital in Soweto, with James McIntyre. Internationally known for her research in HIV vaccines and interventions to prevent transmission of HIV from mother to child, she is the co-PI of the NIH-funded HIV Vaccine Trials Network and is responsible for the expansion of HIV vaccine research in Africa. In 2002, she was awarded the Nelson Mandela Health and Human Rights Award together with James McIntyre. She has published more than 300 peer-reviewed scientific papers and is a member of the Academy of Science in South Africa, the African Academy of Science, and the World Academy of Sciences (TWAS). Prof Gray is one of a handful of South Africans who are foreign associates of the USA National Academy of Medicine, and the National Academies of Sciences, and who has served on their Global Health Board. She was also the Chair for the Global Alliance for Chronic Diseases (GACD).

Dr Gray has been awarded the IAPAC Hero of Medicine award and received the N'Galy-Mann lectureship with James McIntyre in 2009 in recognition of their HIV research contribution in South Africa. In June 2012, she received a DSc (honoris causa) from the Simon Fraser University, Vancouver, and she has also been admitted to the American Academy of Microbiology in 2012. In 2013, Prof Gray received the country's highest honour, the Order of Mapungubwe, granted by the President of SA for achievements in the international arena that served South Africa's interest, as well as the EDCTP's Outstanding African Scientist award. In 2017, she was listed among the Times 100 influential people in the world.

Currently, her focus is on capacity development in science, with a special focus on transformation and increasing diversity in science, for which she received the Regional World Academy of Sciences award for science capacity development in Africa in 2018. Recently, she was listed by Forbes as one of Africa's 50 most powerful women. She is a member of the NRF board, sits on the Wits Council as a member, serves on the board of the international GARDP (Global Antimicrobial Research and Development Partnership), and was recently appointed to the WHO STAG for TB. She serves on the NDOH Ministerial Advisory Committee for COVID 19, and also spearheads the SAMRC funding for COVID-19.