

## A CHANGING LANDSCAPE

The Institute's roots date back to the early 1980s, more than a decade before its actual opening

In 1983, researchers at the University of Maryland conducted an economic study of the state. Results showed that heavy industry was leaving Baltimore and that the area's agricultural base rapidly was shrinking. The Chesapeake Bay no longer was a significant economic engine because of the decimation of the oyster harvest. The report also showed that two major industries were emerging – information technology and biotechnology.

In response, the State of Maryland decided to devote resources to encourage the expansion of the biotechnology industry. Maryland was already home to the National Institutes of Health, Johns Hopkins University, the University System of Maryland, the Uniform Services Medical Center and the Walter Reed Army Medical Center, and the State wanted to build on these resources to develop new economic activity. It looked to the University of Maryland to be a hub for a new center of biotechnology.

Rita R. Colwell, founding president of the University of Maryland Biotechnology Institute, a University System of Maryland constituent organization, was a major force in convincing the State that it should work to develop a separate biotechnology institute rather than build a new program into the college's existing centers and departments.

UMBI acquired the Hutzler Building, an old warehouse in downtown Baltimore, and, using state appropriations and capital, renovated it to house a state-of-the-art biotechnology research facility. Dr. Edmund Tramont was charged with establishing a medical biotechnology center of excellence.

Those on the ground floor of UMBI knew that for them to realize their aspirations of creating a cutting-edge research facility, they would have to recruit some of the top researchers in the country. It was well-known that Dr. Gallo was set to retire from the National Cancer Institute and

multiple programs and institutions were vying for his attention. Tramont approached Dr. Gallo and after a series of discussions — and with the support of Governors William Donald Schaefer and Parris Glendening and Mayor Kurt Schmoke — Baltimore became a serious contender in the bid for the establishment of the Institute of Human Virology.



## CHRONOLOGY OF THE QUEST

1976-1980  
Dr. Robert C. Gallo and co-workers discover the first human retrovirus, HTLV, and developed the techniques that provided the intellectual framework for understanding these viruses.

1982  
The term AIDS is coined two years after the first reported deaths in the United States.

More than 600 have died in the U.S.

Dr. Gallo receives the prestigious Albert Lasker Basic Medical Research Award for revolutionary discovery of the first human retrovirus and methods for growing human T-cells. He received a second Lasker in 1986 for co-discovery of HIV and showing it was the cause of AIDS.

1982-1983  
A Maryland State Economic Report spotlights biotechnology as one of the up and coming industries. Energy and resources are directed toward building and expanding the state's technology base.

“From the start, the governor and his staff felt that Baltimore was the perfect location for the Institute of Human Virology. It was such an outstanding fit – we had the medical school, UMBI and a real clinical need. And I don’t think it’s an exaggeration to say that Baltimore was facing a public health emergency. In the Institute, we saw the opportunity to gain an immediate positive benefit.”

John Porcari

*Former Secretary of the Maryland Department of Transportation and Former Assistant Secretary of Economic Development Policy for the Maryland Department of Business and Economic Development*



David Oldach, M.D.

The University of Maryland Biotechnology Institute (UMBI) is conceived in a report initiated by Rita Colwell, the University System of Maryland’s Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs. Dr. Colwell was later appointed as the founding president of UMBI.

1983

Dr. Gallo and Dr. Luc Montagnier, and colleagues in Paris, discover the HIV retrovirus and show it is the cause of AIDS. More than 5,500 have died in the U.S.

1983 - 1984

Gallo, with Dr. William A. Blattner, publishes the first report of the high sensitivity of the HIV blood test developed by Gallo and coworkers.

1984

The development of an HIV blood test enabled health care workers for the first time to screen for the AIDS virus – leading to a more rapid HIV diagnosis and, simultaneously, the protection of patients receiving blood transfusions. The tissue culture techniques developed by Dr. Milka Popovic and Dr. Gallo opened the door to the blood test as well as a system for testing drugs against HIV.

1985

