

CITATION
Award of the National Medal for Science and Technology

DR. ARNOLDO KHALEEL VENTURA
C.D., B.Sc., M.Sc., Ph.D.

1937 -

Dr. Arnaldo Khaleel Ventura was brought up in a happy, middle class home nestled comfortably amongst fruit trees, butterflies, bees and bright flowers. Winning a Jamaican Government Examination Scholarship, he read for his B.Sc. and later his M.Sc. at the University of the West Indies. His research led him to isolate six new species and two new genera of bird mites. Virology thenceforward became his special field of study for which he was to later gain international recognition as he earned his Ph.D. at Cornell University.

The early introduction to the field of virology brought him into contact with areas where he saw much human deprivation, squalor and suffering. This sparked an interest in the potential for the use of science and technology to aid in the process of human well-being.

This interest was to lead much later to his significant involvement at the international level in the evaluation of science and technology systems at the United Nations, the redirection of the Commonwealth Science Council, the establishment of the Sustainable Trade and Innovation Centre in Brussels and the International Centre for International Development in Holland. He is currently the Chairman of the United Nations Commission on Science and Technology for Development (UNCSTD).

But, it would be his outstanding work in virology that would be the highlight of his more formal scientific career. His interest in virological work in Jamaica earned him an entrée into the exclusive and emerging field of arbovirology for which he got a fellowship to Cornell University. Research contracts followed to undertake pressing work on the epidemiology of arboviruses and the testing of viral vaccines in children.

Dr. Ventura was the first to identify the cause and method of the spread of dengue hemorrhagic fever using simple homemade equipment. He isolated and characterized two of the viruses causing dengue fever and predicted further outbreaks in the Caribbean. He was thus able to provide viruses for the development of appropriate vaccines. The characterization of the two types of dengue viruses saved significant health costs and countless lives. Its impact was recognised, not only in Jamaica, but also regionally and internationally as well. Specifically, he was able to lay to rest speculations about the cause of a deadly outbreak in Jamaica in 1968.

On the basis of this outstanding work he achieved international recognition as a virologist and became a consultant worldwide, including to the United States army. For this, he received the Centenary Medal of the Institute of Jamaica in 1980. A well-known expert on Science and Technology in the Caribbean, Latin America, Asia and Africa, Dr. Ventura has served on several international, regional and local boards and committees.

The Government of Jamaica is pleased to recognise the pioneering work of Dr. Ventura in the field of virology and to award him the **NATIONAL MEDAL FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY.**

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