



◀ Jacob Palis, who served as president of TWAS from 2007 through 2012.

“Perhaps this most special honour was bestowed upon me in view of my great passion for TWAS, designed by Abdus Salam to carry on the building up of science all over the world, with focus on developing countries, to the benefit of their societies,” Palis said.

The Abdus Salam Medal is one of TWAS’s most prestigious awards. It is named for the eminent Pakistani physicist who founded the International Centre for Theoretical Physics (ICTP) in 1964, won the Nobel Prize in physics in 1979, and convened some of the most eminent scientists of the developing world to found TWAS in 1983. The medal was instituted in 1995, a year before Salam’s death.

In a 2013 interview, Palis described meeting Salam shortly after he was elected a TWAS Fellow. Salam offered some brief but profound advice: “My son, think big!”

Palis took that advice to heart, becoming a guiding figure in his home country, a strong presence at ICTP, and then an energetic leader at TWAS. He served as TWAS secretary-general from 2001 through 2006. In 2010, he was awarded the prestigious Balzan Prize for mathematics.

Under Palis’ direction, TWAS experienced significant growth: It opened five regional offices, created new prizes, and dramatically expanded its endowment fund. The number of research grants, PhD fellowships and postdoctoral fellowships available to scientists in the developing world all grew dramatically. ▣

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PALIS WINS ABDUS SALAM MEDAL

 by Edward W. Lempinen

Former TWAS President Jacob Palis has long been an advocate for science in the developing world – first in Brazil, and then globally. The Abdus Salam Medal reflects his commitment to the vision and ideals of TWAS's founder.

Former TWAS President Jacob Palis has been named winner of the 2015 Abdus Salam Medal, a recognition of his years of leadership and global impact in building science and engineering for the advancement of the developing world.

Palis, an early leader in Brazil’s embrace of science for development,

was elected a TWAS Fellow in 1991, and he served as president from 2007 through 2012. He will receive the award at the 26th TWAS General Meeting, slated for 18-21 November in Vienna, Austria. The TWAS Council selected him as the medal winner during the TWAS 25th General Meeting in the Sultanate of Oman.

“Professor Palis is a brilliant mathematician and scientist,” said current TWAS President Bai Chunli of China. “Academically, he is very well recognized and highly regarded. He has contributed hugely to the promotion of scientific collaboration and the cultivation of a young generation of scientists in developing countries. Both as president of TWAS and as a TWAS member, his work and contributions brought us to where we are today.”

Palis has served as president of the Brazilian Academy of Sciences since 2007.