

# *Carlos J. Finlay Order awarded to outstanding Cuban scientists*

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Havana, March 18 (RHC)-- The Cuban government awarded on Wednesday 23 high-level professionals with the Carlos J. Finlay Order, the island's top decoration for contributions to scientific development for the benefit of humanity.

The Ministry of Science, Technology and the Environment (CITMA) also confirmed National Award for Technological Innovation. Another five special awards were granted today to 10 outstanding scientists selected from among 71 researchers.

As the governing body of scientific activity, CITMA submits the Carlos J. Finlay Order candidates to the President of the Republic for approval.

In recognition of their intense research activity and relevant results, the awardees included the Center for Molecular Immunology, the National Center for Biopreparations, the Center for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology, the Fernando Ortiz Foundation and the Henry Reeve Medical Brigade.

On August 14, 1881, at the Academy of Medical, Physical and Natural Sciences of Havana, Carlos Juan Finlay de Barres (1833-1915) presented his thesis on the female *Aedes Aegypti* mosquito as the carrier of yellow fever and a plan to eradicate the disease.

Due to his discovery's transcendence, in 1975, UNESCO included him among the six most outstanding microbiologists in history and awarded for the first time in 1981 the International Award that bears his name to recognize advances in Microbiology.

The Carlos J. Finlay Order was established on January 21, 1928, by decree 77 of President Gerardo Machado to encourage scientists, physicists, and officials (national and foreign) for exceptional merits in the field of public health and social welfare. It was reinstated by Commander in Chief Fidel Castro in 1981 with a new design as an incentive to individuals and groups engaged in scientific, research and teaching activities whose results contribute considerably to the prestige and development of science in our country."

Among the first recipients of the Finlay Order was Francisco Domínguez Roldán (1864-1942), a Cuban physician who introduced radiology and physiotherapy in Cuba. On April 23, 1953, it was awarded in Havana to British researcher Sir Alex Flemming, discoverer of penicillin.

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