



Anatomical Gift Program

Your Gift Can Serve the Future of Medicine



State University of New York
Upstate Medical University

The Future of Medicine

You have a unique opportunity to make a lasting and valuable contribution to the education of health professionals. Through SUNY Upstate Medical University's Anatomical Gift Program, you can provide the foundation of knowledge for future physicians and health professionals.

For years, the generous donations of individuals have made the study of human anatomy possible for students and health professionals. Having donated their bodies for science, these individuals have significantly contributed to the education of health care professionals.

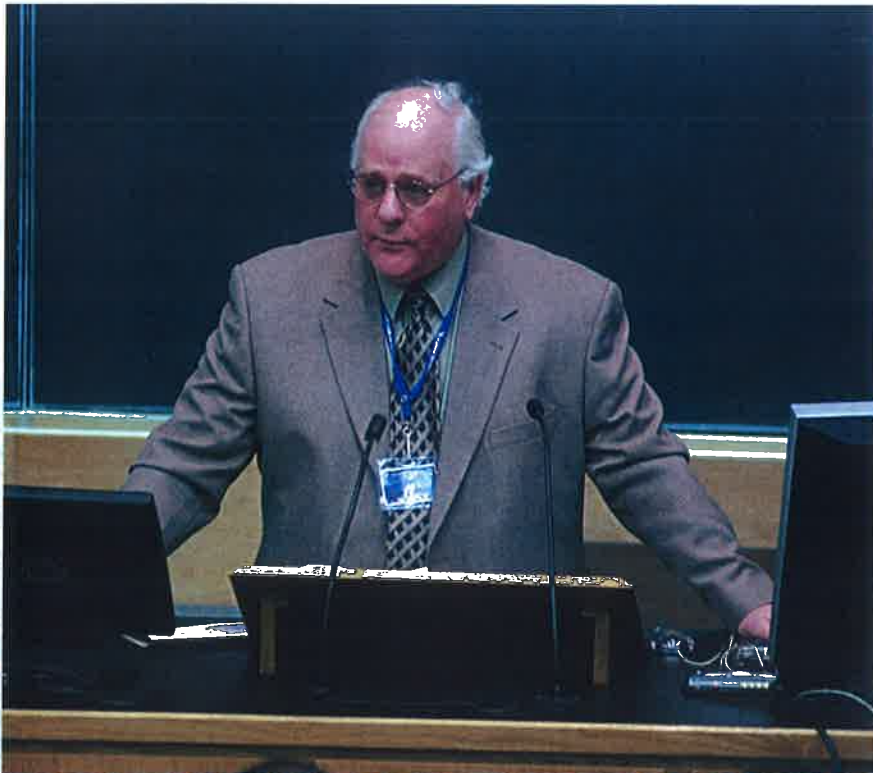
Each year, hundreds of men and women embark on their medical and physical therapy careers at SUNY Upstate Medical University. At the core of their education is anatomy, or the study of the structure of the human body. Thanks to the generosity of donors to the Anatomical Gift Program, these students are able to obtain first-hand knowledge of the wondrous workings of the human body.

In this brochure, you will find answers to commonly asked questions about the Anatomical Gift Program as well as detailed program information, and the forms necessary to make a donation. If you have additional questions after reading this booklet, please call our office at 315-464-4348 and we will be happy to answer them.



Annual Memorial Service

In 1980, first-year medical students began offering a memorial service in remembrance of those who have donated their bodies to benefit medical research and education. First year medical and physical therapy students organize and present a unique gathering that reflects the respect felt for the donors and their families, and provides the opportunity for the students and their instructors to demonstrate their appreciation for the donors' important gifts. That tradition continues today. The service is conducted in late spring on the Upstate campus, and family members of all donors received in the previous calendar year are invited to attend.



N. Barry Berg, Ph.D., is director of the Anatomical Gift Program.

Dear Dr. Berg,

It has taken me longer than I hoped to tell you, the other doctors, and the medical students, how very touched I was by the memorial service honoring my husband and all those special people who donated their bodies. Other than the miracle of seeing my four children after birth, I don't think I have ever been so moved before in my life. My husband was a wonderful man, and I wish you could have known him. He was smart, funny, thoughtful, and had such a positive attitude, even after being diagnosed with lymphoma. There never was any question in his mind that he would donate his body to help educate others and I am so proud that he did and that you all appreciated his gift...

- Barbara Kiernan



Some commonly asked questions about an anatomical gift

Q. Who can make a donation?

A. Anyone over age 18 is eligible to become a donor to our Anatomical Gift Program. All you need to do is fill out and sign the Anatomical Gift Pledge form included with this brochure.

Q. Are there any age limits regarding who is eligible to donate?

A. We will accept the donation of any individual 18 years of age and older. There is no upper age limit for donations.

Q. May I donate even if I have had an organ removed by surgery or lost a limb?

A. Yes. We would be pleased to accept such a donation.

Q. May I donate my body and also donate my organs to an organ bank for transplantation or research purposes?

A. A person may donate his or her eyes and/or brain, and initiate a whole body donation to our program. However, the removal of other internal organs to be used for transplant, such as kidneys, heart, and lungs require extensive surgery and generally means that the body will not be acceptable for donation. If organs are not suitable for transplant, the body could be donated to us for anatomical study. To obtain information for eye or tissue donation, please contact the Central New York Eye and Tissue Bank and Research Corporation, 517 E. Washington St., Syracuse, NY 13202 or call 315-476-0199. To obtain information about organ donation, please contact the Finger Lakes Donor Recovery Network, Madison Irving Medical Center, 475 Irving Ave, Suite 102, Syracuse, NY 13210 or call 315-428-8500.

Q. Are there any conditions under which a donation will not be accepted?

A. The Anatomical Gift Program will accept the donation of anyone who has previously pledged to the program except in the case of an individual who:

1. is under 18 years of age.
2. is excessively obese.
3. has an active communicable disease or is infected with contagious organisms such as HIV, Viral Hepatitis or Tuberculosis.
4. is a carrier (inactive infection) of contagious organisms such as HIV, Viral Hepatitis or Tuberculosis, or
5. if the number of donations exceeds the capacity of our facility to effectively and safely handle additional donations.

- Q. I thought the methods used to preserve a body, killed all microorganisms. Why, then, will the program not accept a donation from someone that has or is a carrier of contagious organisms?
- A. Infectious/contagious organisms that are responsible for diseases such as AIDS, hepatitis or tuberculosis pose a serious safety hazard to anyone who comes in contact with them. There is a lack of good evidence demonstrating that the methods used to preserve bodies will inactivate (kill) these organisms. To reduce the risk that any of our staff or students might contract any of the above diseases, we will not accept donations from anyone who has an active infection or is thought to be a carrier. *If a pledge/prospective donor contracts any of the above communicable diseases, please alert the Anatomical Gift Program so that we can remove the donor from our list.*
- Q. What if I change my mind?
- A. A pledge may be withdrawn at any time prior to death. A written statement to that effect is requested so that we may change our records.
- Q. What if my family does not agree with my wish to donate?
- A. Signing the Anatomical Gift Consent form constitutes a legal document and can only be revoked by the donor. However, if you anticipate or expect your family not to agree, call our office (315-464-4348) for information on appointing an agent that can carry out your wishes.
- Q. How will donation of my body benefit the education of health professionals?
- A. Bodies donated to Upstate's Anatomical Gift Program will be used primarily for the teaching of anatomy. Health professionals from first year medical and physical therapy students to residents and faculty at the Upstate Medical University benefit greatly from the opportunity to engage in active, hands-on learning about the intricacies of the human body.

Donations made to the Anatomical Gift Program are the responsibility of Upstate Medical University. The program will take every step to assure that the donation is used in a respectful manner.

Through our participation in the Associated Medical Schools of New York State, bodies donated to our program may be provided to member schools engaged in the teaching of anatomy to students in the health professions. Upon completion of educational programs, the member schools return the donation to Upstate for cremation.





To Remember Me – I Will Live Forever

The day will come when my body will lie upon a white sheet neatly tucked under four corners of a mattress located in a hospital; busily occupied with the living and the dying.

At a certain moment, a doctor will determine that my brain has ceased to function and that, for all intents and purposes, my life has stopped.

When that happens, do not attempt to instill artificial life into my body by the use of a machine. And don't call this my deathbed. Let it be called the bed of life, and let my body be taken from it to help others lead fuller lives.

Explore every corner of my brain. Burn what is left of me and scatter the ashes to the winds to help the flowers grow.

If you must bury something, let it be my faults, my weakness and all prejudice against my fellow man. Give my sins to the devil. Give my soul to God.

If by chance, you wish to remember me, do it with a kind deed or word to someone who needs you. If you do all I have asked, I will live forever.

- Q. May I designate a particular purpose for the use of my body?
- A. You may note your preference on the donor form, and we will make every effort to honor it, but we can accept a body only as an *unrestricted anatomical gift* since research and educational needs vary from year to year.
- Q. What steps should be taken to release my body to SUNY Upstate Medical University upon my death?
- A. The person responsible for making the arrangements to donate the body of the deceased should contact the Anatomical Gift Program (315-464-4348) promptly to determine if the donation can be accepted. The program requires that the donation be delivered to our facility no longer than 48 hours after death. By law, only a licensed Funeral Home is able to handle the process of transportation of a deceased person. The choice of Funeral Home and the cost of transportation is the responsibility of the person making the arrangements. The program does offer the option of a representative funeral home to handle the transportation of the deceased and the delivery of the documents necessary for the process of donation. The representative funeral home will not handle other services such as obituaries, memorials, etc. Please contact our office for any additional information.
- Q. Will the donation be affected if an autopsy is performed?
- A. A body which has been autopsied or is subject to a medical examiner's request for autopsy generally cannot be accepted for donation. However, the Anatomical Gift Program will review individual cases for exceptions.
- Q. What about a viewing or funeral services?
- A. To accomplish the objectives of our program, it is imperative that the donation be delivered to our facility within 48 hours after death. We will not accept any donation that has been embalmed prior to delivery to our facility. We recognize this means the body will not be present should the family want to have calling hours or a funeral service. Such activities would make it difficult to utilize the donation for our stated purposes.
- Q. What happens if I die some distance away from my home or SUNY Upstate Medical University?
- A. If the distance makes transporting the body impractical, a representative of the Anatomical Gift Program will provide a list of medical schools that may accept the donation geographically closer to the place of death.





Today I Held a Human Heart

Today I held a human heart. It was the day I had been waiting for. We opened up the thorax, removed the lungs and finally lifted out the heart. When I was first accepted into physical therapy school and realized the first class I would be taking was gross anatomy, I began to prepare myself. I told myself that this was just another dissection, like the ones done before in high school and college biology.

But Today I realized it is not.

Today I held a human heart – a heart that was once filled with life, excitement, love. I could no longer push aside the feelings that had been building up within me since we began a week ago.

I could no longer believe that this was simply a monotonous task. This was a human heart – a heart which once filled the core of a human soul.

Today I held a human heart and I wonder, was she happy in life or was it filled with failure or despair? I wonder. Did she find love, was she married, did she have children, did she have grandchildren? I wonder. Was she a housewife or did she rebel in her generation and have a career? I wonder. Did she have the opportunity to travel, what was her favorite place to visit? I wonder. What was her favorite food, her favorite color, her favorite book, her favorite song? I wonder.

Today I held a human heart—something that would make most of my friends cringe. But today I feel stronger, I feel more alive, I feel more blessed and I feel more special. Today I know more than ever that I want to help people and I want to make them better. But how can I possibly give as unconditionally as she has. May I be reminded daily of her generosity, and may it not only make me a better Physical Therapist, but most importantly, a better person.

Today I touched a human heart, but in essence, it touched mine.

Michele Bloom

Q. What happens to my remains?

A. Upon completion of our studies, the remains will be cremated at the expense of SUNY Upstate Medical University at a New York State licensed crematory. If requested, the cremains of the donor will be returned to a person or funeral home as designated by the donor or his/her agent.

Q. Will all my remains be returned?

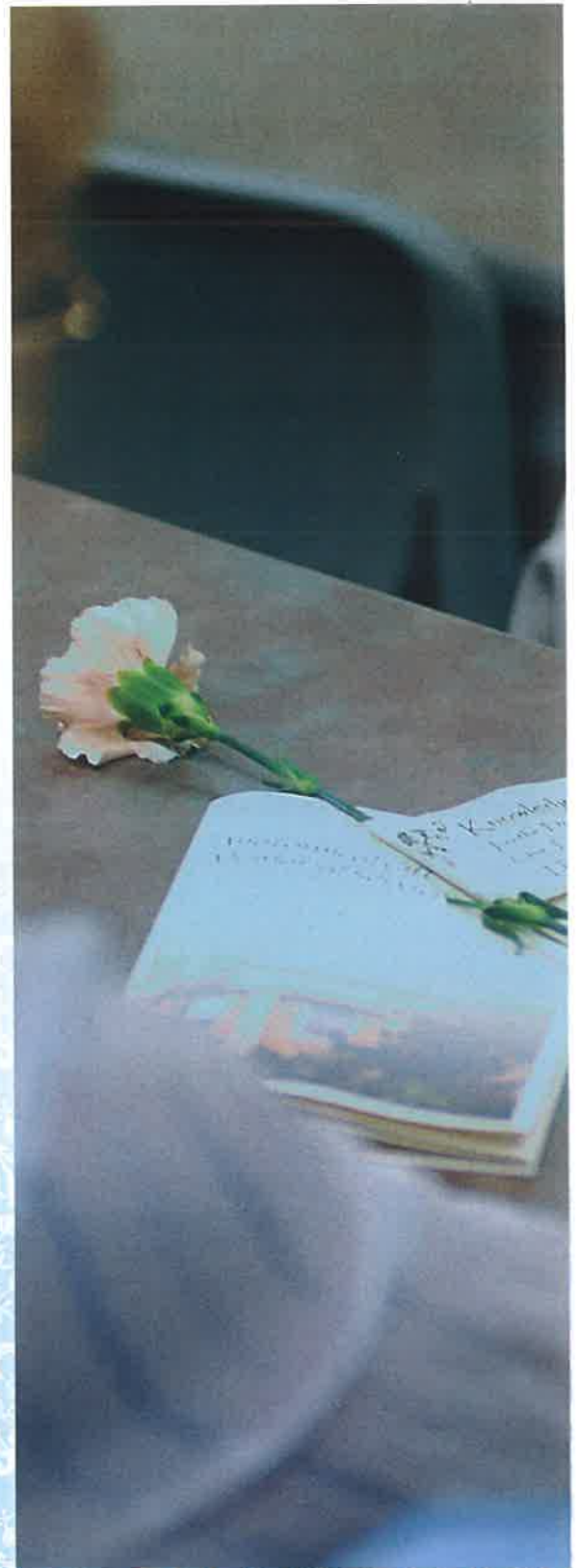
A. There may be times when the donation provides a unique educational opportunity such that we would like to retain a portion of the donation for archival purpose for teaching future students. SUNY Upstate Medical University reserves the right to retain a portion of the donation to be archived as specimens for teaching purposes.

Q. When will the cremains be returned?

A. The time frame varies with each donation. The maximum time a donation is kept is two years. Many donations are kept for a much shorter period of time. Shortly before the cremains are returned via registered mail, a letter is sent to the designated recipient of the cremains. If the designated person responsible for your remains moves, he or she should notify our department of the new address. If there has been a change in the designee, that person's new name and address should also be provided to the Anatomical Gift Program. Please be sure to notify our office if there is a need to have the cremains returned prior to the two-year period.

Q. Will a report of findings concerning the probable cause of death be provided to the person responsible for my remains?

A. Only a licensed pathologist is qualified to provide information regarding cause of death. Therefore the Anatomical Gift Program personnel are not able to provide this information.



A photograph of a university campus. In the foreground, there's a large, leafy tree on the left. A paved path curves through a green lawn towards the right. In the background, there's a brick building partially obscured by more trees. The scene is bright and sunny.

Anatomical Gift Program Documents

Should you choose to make an anatomical gift, please complete the pledge form and return it to the address listed on the form or in the envelope provided.



State University of New York
Upstate Medical University

Anatomical Gift Pledge Form

Please return this completed form to the address listed below or in the envelope provided. You will receive a donor card for your wallet.

This statement is to certify that I wish my body, at the time of my death, to be transported and delivered to the Anatomical Gift Program at SUNY Upstate Medical University to be used as an unrestricted gift for the advancement of medical education and research.

In connection with this pledge, I have received and reviewed the Anatomical Gift Program brochure and I understand its contents and have had any questions fully answered.

I understand that my donation may be provided to a member school that participates in the Associated Medical Schools of New York.

I understand that a portion of my donation may be retained for archival purposes.

I acknowledge that I meet the Program criteria for donation of my body. (as noted in the Q&A section of the brochure)

Donor name (please print): ☐ Mr. ☐ Mrs. ☐ Ms. ☐ Miss _____

Donor's signature: _____

Date of pledge: ____/____/____ Donor's Weight: _____ Donor's Height: _____

Donor's Social Security number: - - Donor's date of birth: ____/____/____

Donor's present address: _____
street city state zip

Donor's phone number: - -
area code

Witness signature: _____

Witness address: _____
street city state zip

Witness phone number: - -
area code



State University of New York

Upstate Medical University

Please return completed forms to:

Department of Cell and Developmental Biology
SUNY Upstate Medical University
Anatomical Gift Program
750 E. Adams St., Rm 1133WH
Syracuse, NY 13210

Return of Cremains

☐ **Please check this box if cremains are NOT to be returned.**

If you have instructed your next-of-kin/agent as to the disposition of your cremains, please fill out that information below.

Donor name (*please print*): _____

Name of person or institution to whom cremains should be delivered:

Address: _____

Phone number:

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area code city state zip

Relationship to Donor: _____

Correspondence

To whom should all correspondence be directed:

☐ Check here if information above is the same.

Name (*please print*): _____

Address: _____

Phone number:

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area code city state zip

Relationship to Deceased: _____



State University of New York
Upstate Medical University

To the families who have generously given,

I am a twenty-two year old student of medicine, one among many. In the short years that I have made my own choices and learned from their consequences, I have realized that many of these choices were based on self-interest; the kind of self-interest that helped me succeed and the kind that hurt those close to me. These choices based on egocentrism have awarded my successes with emptiness. When I first entered those white laboratory doors, the only thought that captured my mind was “Will I succeed? Will I prove my worth to those around me?” As weeks go by, I was first astonished by the complex piping of the human body, then overwhelmed with the clinical aspects, and finally humbled by the hands of those who have given themselves, hands that are just like my grandmother’s and my great uncle’s hands. I began to fully understand my intent to pursue a medical education. It is truly those who give without expecting return who contribute most to humanity. Your gift will perpetuate through each of us, not only as a means of education, but as an emblem of utmost altruism. It is an emblem that we can return to, time and again, as decisions arise in our career that calls for selflessness for the sake of others. I would like to extend sincere thanks on behalf of our class. Our appreciation and your gift are for a lifetime, as we utilize the knowledge and gratitude acquired to heal those in need.

In the memoirs of my grandmother, Dr. Myra Shayevitz, regarding her experience in an anatomy laboratory in 1955, she states, “Today, because of you, I shall touch another human being for the first time as a member of the medical profession. When my task is completed I shall likely not return to this place, but today is the beginning, the first step along my way to follow my destiny.

You, who shall always be nameless, have given me a great gift.

I promise to use it well always.”

And we also promise.

Tina Shayevitz



State University of New York

Upstate Medical University

Department of Cell & Developmental Biology
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315.464.4348 • <http://www.upstate.edu/cdb/donor>

F88499 Rev. 4/2009