

University of South Carolina School of Medicine

Anatomical Programs

Gift of Body Donation Program
Polymer Preservation Program

Dear Friends:

Thank you so very much for your interest in the Gift of Body Program that is managed by the Department of Cell Biology and Anatomy at the University of South Carolina School of Medicine. It is because of individuals who make unselfish contributions through this program that the School of Medicine is able to serve the state of South Carolina by training health professionals.

This program began in the 1970's as our medical school began the process of training health professionals to serve the citizens of South Carolina. We are very proud to say that the citizens of our state have been very generous in their contributions; thus, our Gift of Body Program has far exceeded our expectations. Unfortunately, the costs of this program (transportation, embalming services, processing of legal documents, cremation, and other assorted expenses) have far outpaced our state funding. Due to the financial constraints that we are facing, we would like to ask you to consider making a tax deductible contribution of \$500 to help cover these expenses. This donation can be made at this time, in installments or perhaps as a part of your estate. Such a donation should be made to the USC Educational Foundation, and mailed to us in care of: USC School of Medicine, Cell Biology – attn: Anatomical Programs, Columbia, SC 29208. Please note that this donation is strictly voluntary. Whether you chose to make a donation or not, we will honor our commitment to you as a contributor to our program.

Should you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact our program coordinator, Lisa Buchanan at (803) 216-3888. Again, thank you for your interest in our program.

Sincerely,

Erika Blanck, DPT, ATC
Director, USC Gift of Body Program

EB/ljb

Instructions Pertinent to the "GIFT OF BODY DONATION" Forms

1. The Gift of Body Donation Form Set consists of three parts. The first part is made up of this page of instructions and two double-sided forms that are to be completed and returned to: **USC School of Medicine, Cell Biology – Attn: Anatomical Programs, Columbia, SC 29208**. All questions should be completed. If an answer is unknown, every effort should be made to find out from any sources that are available to the donor. However, if the answer still cannot be determined, be sure to answer the question as “UNKNOWN”. Any blank spaces on the form will cause a delay in the processing of the application. The second part of the Donation Form Set is a collection of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) that the donor should keep for future reference. The third part of the Donation Form Set specifically concerns the Permanent Donation Program (Polymer Preservation) that is also available at the University of South Carolina School of Medicine.
2. Once the completed forms are received in the Gift of Body (GOB) Program office, the forms will be date stamped and a copy made for return to the donor. This copy will be mailed along with the initial acceptance letter and a wallet-sized donor card. We advise that a copy of this bequest should be given to a responsible relative, physician, clergyman, or other person, so that he/she may notify the School of Medicine at the time of the donor's death. *It is the responsibility of the donor* to notify the School of Medicine of any changes pertinent to the maintenance of this agreement (i.e. address, phone, next of kin changes, etc.).
3. If this "Gift of Body" donation contradicts previous instructions in the donor's "Last Will and Testament", a codicil (change or addition) to the will should be considered. If the "Gift of Body" donation is not in conflict with the donor's will, a codicil may not be necessary but may be added if the donor wishes. You should contact your attorney to discuss this matter.
4. Please note that the term “Next-of-Kin” as used on these forms is to be determined by the donor. The “next-of-kin” should be the person or persons who are the closest legal next-of-kin (marital or biological) for the donor. However, if there are no living marital or biological next-of-kin, the donor may proclaim an Executor, Power-of-Attorney holder (POA), or Personal Representative as “Next-of-kin” for the GOB program purposes. This “Next-of-Kin” is the person who program personnel will be contacting following the death of the donor with information that will be needed regarding death certificate, obituary notices, yearly memorial service, etc... We ask that the donor confirm with their designated “Next-of-Kin” that this person is willing to act in this role for the GOB Program purposes. This person will be expected to act as spokesperson for the family and to share information to the family, as provided by the program, as needed.
5. We suggest that the donor read completely through the Gift of Body Donation Form Set prior to completing any of the forms. The majority of any questions you may have will be addressed within. If you should have any questions that are NOT answered in these materials, please feel free to contact the program office at (803) 216-3888. The program Coordinator will be happy to address any concerns.
6. Please note that if the forms are being filled out by someone other than the donor, the DONOR must sign and or initial where donor signature is indicated. Forms must be filed with the donors original signature! Copied form pages are accepted for filing, however the signature must be an original and NOT copied! Likewise, forms faxed back to the program will not be accepted for filing.
7. ***Form page numbers 2, 3, and 4 must be completed*** and returned to the program office in order for the filing to be considered completed. Page 5 should be completed **only** if the donor wishes to be donated permanently to the University of South Carolina. Please note that a permanent donation will NOT have the option of having ashes returned to the family. If the donor decides to file as a permanent donation to the University of South Carolina, he/she **MUST** initial beside each of the four statements on the “Permanent Anatomical Donation Release Form” (page 5) as well as sign on that page. The witnesses for this form should include the closest legal next-of-kin to the donor **AND** either the Executor, Power-of-Attorney holder, or Personal Representative for the donor.
8. **Please retain these instructions in your files, along with any returned copies.**

Please print the name of the person filling out donor forms (self or state name & relationship to donor):

PLEASE LIST LIVING NEXT-OF-KIN (Spouse, Children, Siblings, Parents, etc.):

NAME	RELATION	PHONE #	COMPLETE MAILING ADDRESS

I, _____ [donor name] agree to each of the following statements as indicated by my initials on the line next to each X:

X _____ I understand and agree to the conditions for donation of my body to the University of South Carolina School of Medicine upon the event of my death, as laid out in the Gift of Body Donation Form Set as provided by the Gift of Body Program.

X _____ I understand and agree that initial acceptance of my donation intent does not guarantee final acceptance into the program and that my donation intent will be subject to confirmation/refusal by Gift of Body Program personnel at the time of my death (see FAQ sheet for reasons for possible refusal of donation).

X _____ I understand that it is my responsibility to contact the program with any information to be updated (change of address, next-of-kin designation, marital status, etc...) for my donation intent to remain current.

X _____ I understand that I may change my mind at any time and cancel my donation intent by means of signed letter written to the program. The program will mail confirmation of any cancellation to the donor at the last address noted.

X _____ I understand that I may elect to donate my body permanently to the University by completing page 5 of this form set. I also understand that my cremated remains will not be available for return to the family should I choose this option for Permanent Donation.

_____ Date

_____ Donor Signature Required (POA accepted with documentation)

Donor will receive a copy of these documents returned with donor confirmation letter. Please keep all donor program documentation with your important papers!! You may wish to give a copy of these documents to your family, Doctor or Hospice worker to place in your file as needed.

This information is used to complete the Death Certificate. Please be as thorough as possible. If the answer is unknown, then write "Unknown" in the space. Nothing should be left blank. Do not use initials, use full legal names. If donor has A.K.A. name, please state that name as well.

PLEASE PRINT OR TYPE FORMS

NAME (First, Middle, Last) Females should state BIRTH middle name, not maiden.			SOCIAL SECURITY #
SEX	DATE OF BIRTH	CITY/STATE OF BIRTH – and Country if foreign	EVER IN THE US ARMED FORCES?
M F			YES NO
LEGAL ADDRESS – (Street Address (Do NOT use PO Box), Apt # as needed, City, State & Zip Code)			
COUNTY	INSIDE CITY LIMITS?	PHONE # (Home)	PHONE # (Cell or Work)
	YES NO		

FATHER (FIRST, MIDDLE, LAST) note Sr., Jr., etc... as needed		MOTHER (FIRST, MIDDLE [Birth Name], MAIDEN)	
MARITAL STATUS (Select best choice):			
Never Married	Married	Married, but separated	Divorced (& not remarried) Widowed
**IF MARRIED: CURRENT SPOUSE FULL NAME (Give middle [birth] name AND maiden name for Wife)			
NEXT OF KIN (besides spouse)	RELATIONSHIP	ADDRESS & PHONE #	
** If no Next of Kin - Name of Executor or Power Of Attorney (Note which) – Include Address & Phone #			

EDUCATION (Highest level completed – Select one):	8 th grade or less	9 th – 12 th grade, no diploma
High school graduate or GED completed	Some college credit, but no degree	Associate degree (e.g., AA, AS)
Bachelor's degree (e.g., BA, AB, BS)	Master's degree (e.g., MA, MS, MEng., Med, MSW, MBA)	
Doctorate (e.g., PhD, EdD) or Professional degree (e.g., MD, DDS, DVM, LLB, JD)		

DONOR OF HISPANIC ORIGIN? (Select One)	Not Spanish/Hispanic/Latino/Latina	Cuban
Puerto Rican	Mexican, Mexican American, Chicano/Chicana	Other (Specify)

DONOR'S RACE (Check one or more races to indicate what the donor considers himself/herself to be):					
White	Black or African American	Asian Indian	Chinese	Filipino	Japanese
Korean	Vietnamese	Native Hawaiian		Guamanian or Chamorro	
Samoan	Other Pacific Islander (Specify)		Other Asian (Specify)		
American Indian or Alaska Native (Name of enrolled or principal tribe)					

USUAL OCCUPATION DURING CAREER (Do NOT used Retired)	TYPE OF BUSINESS/INDUSTRY (Be Specific)

**USC SCHOOL OF MEDICINE
GIFT OF BODY DONATION FORM**

Pursuant to the provisions of the Uniform Anatomical Gift Act of the State of South Carolina (South Carolina Code Annotated 44-43-310 through 44-43-400, 1976, as amended),

I, (print) _____ being of sound mind and over the age of
(name of donor)

eighteen (18) years, do hereby, effective at the time of death, give my entire body to the University of South Carolina School of Medicine Gift of Body Program for the purposes of medical teaching and research. The Department of Cell Biology & Anatomy reserves the right to use the donation here or at other health-related schools or hospitals.

If you prefer that the donation be used only at U.S.C., please inform us in writing. Cremation and disposition of the remains will be the responsibility of the School of Medicine.

Signing this document acknowledges that you, the donor, have read and understand all of the attached instructions.

Executed this _____ day of _____, _____.
(month) (year)

(Signature of donor)

(Social security number) (Phone number)

(Complete mailing address)

FIRST WITNESS

(Print name of first witness) (Relationship)

(First witness address – include phone #)

(Signature of first witness) (Date)

SECOND WITNESS

(Print name of second witness) (Relationship)

(Second witness address – include phone #)

(Signature of second witness) (Date)

**USC SCHOOL OF MEDICINE
PERMANENT ANATOMICAL DONATION RELEASE FORM**

Pursuant to the provisions of the Uniform Anatomical Gift Act of the State of South Carolina (South Carolina Code Annotated, 44-43-310 through 44-43-400, 1976, as amended),

I, (print name) _____ hereby donate my body to the University of South Carolina School of Medicine, Polymer Preservation Program, to be utilized in any manner that is deemed necessary and appropriate [*Initial each statement indicating agreement*].

X _____ I understand that such use may involve demonstration of anatomical structures for educational purposes, within or external to the University of South Carolina.

X _____ I also authorize the release of my medical information and history to the University of South Carolina School of Medicine Gift of Body Program.

X _____ I also would like to make it known that the University of South Carolina has permission to permanently keep my body, and I completely understand that my body or my ashes will not be returned to the family upon completion of the study period.

X _____ I understand that at such time as study is completed on my body that the cremated remains will be interred at the School of Medicine Memorial Garden.

Signing this document acknowledges that you, the donor, have read and understand all of the attached instructions.

Executed before the below listed witnesses on this day, _____.
(month) (day) (year)

(Signature of donor)

FIRST WITNESS

(Print name of first witness) (Relationship)

(First witness address – include phone #)

(Signature of first witness) (Date)

SECOND WITNESS

(Print name of second witness) (Relationship)

(Second witness address – include phone #)

(Signature of second witness) (Date)

University of South Carolina School of Medicine

Gift of Body Program FAQ Sheet (Frequently Asked Questions)

When does my "Intent of Donation" register with your program? It is immediately upon receipt?

There is a seven day waiting period from the date that the forms are received in our offices containing original signatures, until the initial acceptance of the donation intent is considered complete. This allows for all paperwork to be processed, our databases to be updated and for you to receive your letter of acceptance in the mail.

OK, I got my acceptance letter and my donor card in the mail. So now what happens?

Following the death of a Gift of Body Donor, the Next-of-Kin, legal representative, or medical personnel should contact the program at (803) 216-3888. Once the family is ready for us to pick up the body, the University will make arrangements for transportation of the body to the School of Medicine.

** If a donor dies at home, the first call should be to the Coroners Office for the county of death. Once the Coroners office has been called, and the body released, the Gift of Body Program may be called. *Coroner's office should fax the Burial/Transit Permit to the program at (803) 216-3848.*

What happens if I die on the weekend or after office hours?

The Next-of-Kin, legal representative or medical personnel should contact the program at (803) 216-3888. If the office is closed, the answering machine will relay instructions on what procedure to follow.

What happens if I die on vacation or while out of the country?

If a donor passes away outside of the state of South Carolina, we make every effort (with the family's permission) to have the body donated to a local program. If the family specifically wants the donor returned for acceptance at the University of South Carolina School of Medicine, then the family is responsible for all transportation fees.

If a donor passes away while overseas, we suggest that the family do a direct cremation and cancel the intent of donation. Cost and time factors involved with transporting a body back to the states adds an excessive amount of stress during an already stressful time for the family. We ask, however, that in this situation that the family inform us of this decision so that we may close out our file for the donor.

What about my personal effects? How does my family get those back?

Any jewelry, eyeglasses or other personal effects should be claimed by the family, or healthcare worker prior to transport to the University.

What if I spend part of each year in another state? Can I still be a donor?

Yes. Our suggestion is to arrange donation intent in both states where you spend your time. Then, the process would already be in place for donation upon death in either state. However, please inform the alternate program of the donor's passing so that they can close the donor file.

Will there be any charge to my family?

No. There are no charges from the University of South Carolina School of Medicine unless the family decides to go outside of Gift of Body standard protocol. If so, any charges incurred will go directly to the family. Any deviation from standard protocol must be discussed with program personnel before final acceptance.

Do we need to contact a funeral home?

No. The School of Medicine acts as the funeral home for our donor and will work with the family to get the death certificates filed and obituary notices placed. Should the family wish to do a memorial service for the donor, they may enlist the assistance of a traditional funeral home, but it is not required. If a family does wish to engage a funeral home, please have the funeral home personnel contact the program to familiarize themselves with Gift of Body protocol. Any deviation from our standard protocol may cause the donation to be declined (further explanation follows).

What immediate financial charges can my family expect following my death?

Transport: There is no charge to the family unless the family has a funeral home (or other agency) move the body - if that is the case, the family directly incurs any charges from the funeral home as this action would be outside of the program protocol.

** The only exception to the standard (no-cost) transport protocol is for current donors who have moved out of South Carolina to a neighboring state, and did not wish to transfer to a local donor program; In this instance then, for final acceptance, the family must agree to pay cost of mileage for the transport outside of the state. This out-of-state-mileage fee must accompany the donor body and be paid to USC School of Medicine.

Obituary notices: The Gift of Body program will work with the family to have notices placed at newspapers specified by the family. Family will give information for the obituary notice directly to the selected newspaper(s), and will be directly responsible for any fees incurred.

Death certificates: There is a small fee from the county of death for Certified Death Certificates. These will be needed for Insurance, Banking Institutions, Probate and Social Security, etc... This fee is payable directly to the county in which the donor died.

Memorial service: Any private ceremony arrangements remain the responsibility of the family.

** The Gift of Body program, medical students and professors sponsor a memorial service once a year for all donors who passed away during that year. Family and friends are invited to join us at this yearly service, which is usually held late March or early April.

Is a funeral ceremony allowed before donation of my body?

Yes, as long as the body is kept cool and transported within 48 hours of expiration. Preferably, the family will hold a memorial service without the body present (as the body begins to break down immediately after death). Any delay in transport of the body must be discussed with program personnel.

Can my family hold a viewing, or visit to say goodbye once my body has been transferred to USC?

No. The University of South Carolina School of Medicine does not have the facilities for any type of viewing. If there are family members at a distance who wish to say a final farewell, we can delay transport for a particular period of time. However, these arrangements need to be discussed with program personnel as soon as possible. Once the body is transported to the School of Medicine, there will be no viewing or visitation allowed.

Is there any chance that the University will not accept my body when I die?

Unfortunately yes. Certain conditions, if present, will preclude acceptance into the Gift of Body program:

- No prior arrangement of filing of completed paperwork with the program
- Family (or Coroner) requested autopsy
- Family objection or refusal
- More than 72 hours post-mortem (even if stored in cold room/morgue storage)
- Any embalming procedures begun or performed by personnel other than that of the program
- Sepsis or open wounds (minor bedsores excepted)
- Contagious diseases: HIV, VRE, Hepatitis C (at any time), any current Hepatitis, Tuberculosis, etc.
- Dementia from Creutzfeldt-Jakob (early onset/rapid death) form of Alzheimer's
- Any potential infection which could present a hazard to faculty, staff or students during study
- Post-mortem donated body parts other than eyes to other programs
- Any trauma to the body (i.e., accident, suicide, etc.)
- Any recent (72 hour) Radiation, Isotope tracing, Radioactive angiogram or Radioactive iodine
- Any Radioactive implant for Cancer treatment

What is my family supposed to do if my body is refused? Isn't this a contract for the school to accept my body when I die?

The University of South Carolina School of Medicine is not a mortuary. The program is for "Intent of Whole Body Donation", and as the focus of the donations is to teach Human Anatomy for medical students, the donations need to meet the needs of the school. The percentage of refusals is minimal, but the refusal list and policy is taken very seriously. There are specific reasons for each item on the refusal list. Families should be prepared to make other arrangements should any of the above conditions be present at the time of the donor's passing.

What will my body be used for?

The specific purpose for the Gift of Body program at the University of South Carolina School of Medicine is for training of the first year medical students in the subjects of Gross Anatomy and Medical Embryology.

What about organ donation? Can I donate my organs for transplant?

The only type of post-mortem (after death) donation allowed in conjunction with the Gift of Body program is that of eye donation. If the donor wishes to follow this intent, those arrangements must be made in advance with a local hospital or clinic for the harvesting of eyes once death has occurred. These arrangements, and any costs incurred, are the responsibility of the donor and/or the donor's family. These procedures must be completed prior to transport to the School of Medicine as we do not have the facilities or staff to perform this procedure.

Will my family get a report about what caused my death?

No. An autopsy would be required in order to provide a report concerning specifics beyond those listed on the Death Certificate. Requirement of an autopsy would preclude acceptance to the program. And although the program is used for the teaching of Gross Anatomy (whole body study), the students are not at a level at which they would be able to provide any kind of a report to the family.

Can my body be used for research in order to cure a particular disease/disorder?

Unfortunately no. Our program is specifically geared toward teaching. And although there are many individuals who wish to donate their bodies to science with the specific purpose of helping to cure a particular disease or disorder, there are few programs for research that use post-mortem tissues. The majority of those research programs follow participants in a study through the progression of their disease.

How long will the University hold my body for study after I die?

Generally, the "study period" is from one to four years depending on study assignment. At the end of the study period, each donor's body will be cremated and returned to the Gift of Body program offices for arrangement of final disposition.

What happens to my body once the study period is complete?

Upon completion of the study period, each cadaver will receive a cremation at the expense of the School of Medicine. The Cremains (cremated remains) will be interred at the school's expense at the Gift of Body Memorial Garden, which is located on the School of Medicine grounds. The interment site is marked with a suitable plaque and a memorial book honoring the donors.

Can my family get my ashes back?

By request, cremains of Gift of Body Program donors may be returned to family for private disposition via personal release or registered mail at the school's expense. The school must be notified in writing, including contact persons' name, address and phone number. In order to assure return of cremains, the family must make their request within two months of the date of death. Late notifications are not guaranteed. After cremation and interment, the cremains cannot be removed and returned to the family. Donors who sign up for the Permanent Donation Program (see Polymer Preservation Program information) will not have the option of having cremains returned to the family.

Can my ashes be buried/scattered/entombed at a particular location?

Yes. Your family or Next-of-Kin representative has various choices for final disposition of your cremains (ashes). As long as the program has been notified that the cremains are to be returned, we will make every effort to get them back to the family. However, it is the responsibility of the family or Next-of-Kin representative to make arrangements for the final disposition. Once the cremains are available for return, we will contact the individual listed as contact person for the donor. It is at that time that we will make the final arrangements for return.

** For donors with non-responsive Next-of-Kin representatives concerning return of donor cremains, the cremains will be held in our offices for 12 months, and then interred in the memorial garden. It is the responsibility of the contact persons to notify the program of any change of address.

Can my family change my donation intent against my will?

Technically, no. The form that you signed donating your body to science following your death is a legal document stating your intent. However, we do strongly suggest that each donor discuss their wishes with the family. We have found that the strongest protest from families comes when the donation is a surprise. As this can be a somewhat sensitive issue, it is understandable that a donor may be hesitant to discuss this decision with family. However, we ask that donors keep two facts in mind:

- 1) If the family does not inform the program about the death of a donor, intent becomes a moot point. Donation can only occur if the program is informed of the donors' passing.
- 2) The University will not force a donation against the expressed protests of the family.

Be kind and give your family the chance to understand your feelings about this issue, so that they can come to terms with your decision to donate.

What if my family and I are estranged, or I want to donate no matter what they say?

In all cases, it is a good idea to name one particular person as the executor of your will. The executor should be someone whom you trust to carry out your instructions for the disposition of your body and your estate. We still suggest that all donors discuss their intent of donation with their family whether an executor is named or not. The legal issue of who "owns" your body after your death has never been adequately explored or determined by the legal system in our state. For your own peace of mind, it is best to have settled this issue before you pass away, rather than leave family members to argue over it once you are gone.

Where does my body go? Is this program and the group in Charleston the same thing? Are they the same as the program I signed up for back in another state when I lived there? Is the card I got at the health fair good at any of these programs?

Donors signed with USC School of Medicine Gift of Body Program will be delivered to the VA Campus of USC on Garners Ferry Road in Columbia, SC. There is also a donor program located in Charleston at the Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC), but these programs are not connected. Each program is run independently and according to the particular needs of that school; therefore the policies and protocol for each program is set by the institution that sponsors that program. Do not assume that what is standard for one program is standard for another. Across the country, each donation program will have its own set of qualifications for acceptance, as well as their own procedures. There is no unified or universal program of body donation. And although someone may have signed up for and gotten a donor card at a local health fair, this does NOT mean that they have enrolled with any particular program. The card merely signifies intent. It does not mean acceptance.

Which program should I sign up for? Columbia or Charleston? Are there any other programs in, or around South Carolina?

At this point in time, South Carolina has only the two programs for whole body donation, Columbia and Charleston. The Columbia program is open for acceptance from the entire state, but a donor who lives closer to Charleston may wish to look at the program there. Keep in mind though, that each program will have its own criteria for acceptance. There are several programs in North Carolina and Georgia, but again, each will have its own criteria for acceptance. However, most programs tend to stay with in-state donations only.

What if my friend wants to donate when he/she dies? What about the family friends who wish to donate their stillborn child, or the grandparent when he/she passes away?

Anyone wishing to file an intent of donation can contact the program for the informational packet, which also contains the forms needed to file. The forms do need to be witnessed, but a notary is not required. The program is restricted to acceptance for individuals 18 years and older only. Individuals can only donate themselves. If an intended donor is of frail health, someone can fill out the forms for the donor, but the donor must sign the official forms themselves. Forms with original donor signatures must be submitted to the program, a copied signature, or a faxed copy will NOT suffice.

Is there no exception?

The only exception is for those individuals who have openly expressed the intention to donate, but whose health has severely declined, or their disease has progressed to the point that they are no longer able to sign the forms. If there has been a legal Power-of-Attorney (P.O.A.) appointed for the individual, that person may sign as the P.O.A. for the individual, but a copy of the P.O.A. document must be filed with the donation application. This must be filed before the death of a donor as P.O.A. ceases at death. Again, these arrangements are best done in advance, rather than risk leaving it to the last minute. The seven-day waiting period would be in effect for P.O.A. donations as well.

The other exception is for veterans who pass away at the Dorn VA Medical Center in Columbia, SC. We can accept Next-of-Kin donations from the Dorn VA Medical Center **ONLY**. No exceptions to this.

I had heard that you could get paid or reimbursed for donating your body? Or that my spouse could claim something on their taxes for donation?

There are lots of rumors or "urban legends" concerning body donation. Please feel free to ask for the facts if you are unsure. Please do not assume that what someone tells you they heard, is true. There is no reimbursement, or exchange of monies for someone donating their body. It is illegal to "sell" or "buy" a body, but this is a rumor that stubbornly persists - It is not true. And since it is illegal to "sell" or "buy" a body, it is also not possible to set a "price" on a loved one's body for the purposes of claiming the donation for tax purposes.

What if I think of another question?

Any additional questions or concerns can be addressed to the program coordinator Lisa Buchanan at (803) 216-3888. She will be happy to answer your concerns.

University of South Carolina School of Medicine

Anatomical Programs

Gift of Body Donation Program
Polymer Preservation Program

Dear Friends,

We would like to introduce you to an exciting educational resource at the University of South Carolina School of Medicine, the Polymer Preservation Program. This program serves to enrich and further enhance medical education of our future physicians and works in conjunction with our current Gift of Body Program, enabling us to go beyond current limitations and utilize donor gifts to their fullest educational levels.

The mission of the Polymer Preservation Program is to offer Gift of Body donors the option of enhancing the value of their contribution to medical science by choosing to have their anatomical gift permanently preserved with a state-of-the-art Polymer Preservation process. In fulfillment of this mission, we strive at all times to achieve the highest ethical standards, while respecting the value and sensitivity of the use of our donor's final contribution. This process involves expert specimen dissection by professional anatomy instructors, followed by a special chemical process replacing cellular fluids with a special polymer preserving the specimen, creating a permanent teaching resource that lasts for many years.

Traditional teaching of Anatomy at USC School of Medicine directs first year medical student through dissection over the course of a semester. It is through this "hands on" process they form the all important, initial medical education that will be the basis for all future study. The students are assigned to embalmed cadavers, who have specifically donated their bodies to the Gift of Body program. At the end of the semester, each cadaver is cremated and the ashes either interred in the Donor Memorial Garden on the grounds of the School of Medicine, or returned to the family for final disposition.

Due to the nature of the course, each cadaver can only be utilized for teaching for a semester. If a cadaver should present an interesting medical condition or have a rare operating technique, it can be used as an additional teaching resource, but again this opportunity can only be utilized for a semester. A cadaver processed through the Polymer Preservation Program could be used as a teaching tool for medical students for decades. As the cost of educating medical students continues to rise, these permanent specimens can enhance a teaching program many times over.

We are excited about the resource potential this new program provides to our future physicians through the creation of educational specimens. We hope you will share our excitement and choose to join us in this new endeavor by selecting to enhance your anatomical donation through participation in the Polymer Preservation Program. Attached you will find more information about the program in the form of "Frequently Asked Questions". Remember to complete form page on 5 if you wish to participate with this exciting new program. Should you not wish to participate in this optional program, you may simply place a large "X" through the form on page 5.

As always, thank you for your continued interest in the Gift of Body Program here at the University of South Carolina School of Medicine. If you should have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact the Anatomical Programs office at (803) 216-3888.

Respectfully,

Erika Blanck, DPT, ATC
Program Director
Polymer Preservation Program
Gift of Body Donation Program

University of South Carolina School of Medicine

Polymer Preservation Program (Permanent Donation)

FAQ Sheet (Frequently Asked Questions)

What is the main difference between the Polymer Preservation Program (PP) and the Gift of Body Program (GOB)?

Those who have donated to the GOB Program have the option of having their cremated remains (cremains) returned to the family at the end of the study period, which lasts anywhere from one to four years. Those who have selected the option for PP would not have the option for return of cremains to the family as this is a permanent donation.

Can someone be a donor to the PP program but not the GOB program?

Generally all donors would be processed through the Gift of Body donation program, and the policies that affect the GOB would also be in place for the PP program. However, in a few instances, it may be possible for someone to not be eligible for the GOB but acceptable as a donor to the PP. This would be determined on a case by case basis. Generally this comes into play for donors who may have open wounds (surgery or bedsores) or trauma to the body. The donation would not be suitable as a teaching cadaver, but might be suitable for specimen education.

What will my body be used for?

The specific purpose for the Polymer Preservation Program at the University of South Carolina School of Medicine is for the creation of high quality, finely detailed specimens for the teaching of Human Anatomy.

How long will the University hold my body for study after I die?

With the Gift of Body program, the "study period" is from one to four years. However, with the Polymer Preservation Program, the donation is a "permanent gift" to the School of Medicine and as such, would not be returned. Should for some reason, the specimen become unsuitable for use in teaching, it would be cremated and interred at the Donor Memorial Garden.

What if I don't want to enroll in the Permanent Donation Program, or my family wants the ashes returned to them?

Enrollment in the PP program is not required. It is merely an option and an opportunity to enhance the value of your anatomical donation to our future physicians.

What if I think of another question?

Any additional questions or concerns can be addressed to the program administrator Lisa Buchanan at (803) 216-3888. She will be happy to answer your concerns.