

Anatomical Donor Program



We here at Columbia University's Medical School hope that you will consider becoming an Anatomical Donor. It is crucial for ALL medical students to learn anatomy, not just those who want to become surgeons. For example, anesthesiologists must understand where to best inject anesthetics, internists and pediatricians must be able to imagine a patient's anatomy without looking inside, and radiologists must interpret anatomical structures in all dimensions. Nothing equals the human body for teaching both normal and abnormal anatomy. This experience cannot be replaced with books or 3D computer programs. Donations may also be used for the further training of surgeons and the development of new and improved surgical methods and new implants such as joint replacements and artificial hearts.

Dr. Paulette Bernd

Professor, Department of Pathology & Cell Biology

Director of the Donor Program

Director, Clinical Gross Anatomy

What Happens When the Time Comes?

As part of the donation process, you will be letting us know who will be responsible for carrying out your last wishes. This could be your spouse/partner, next of kin or executor/executrix. This person will need to contact the Anatomical Donor Program at 212-305-3600 during business hours as soon as possible following your death

We need to make sure that your body can be used effectively and safely to educate our students. Therefore, when your loved one calls our program we will be asking the following questions:

- Did you have a communicable disease?
- Were you obese, emaciated or malformed?
- Was an autopsy performed?
- Were organs (other than the corneas) removed for transplant?
- Did you have an open wound just prior to death?
- Were you over the age of 18?
- Is your body located within 60 miles of NYC?

Once we have confirmed that your donation is acceptable, we will take care of the rest at no charge. Our funeral director will retrieve your body, move it to our facility and provide four Death Certificates to your loved one.

What Happens Once Students Finish?

It is important that your loved one be aware that you may be kept by the program up to 2 years or longer. Once our studies are finished your body will be cremated at no cost to your loved one (this includes transportation and filing of permits). If desired, your ashes will be returned to your spouse/partner, next of kin or executor/executrix. If not, they will be interred in a grave owned by Columbia University.

Each year our students acknowledge the completion of their study of anatomy by holding a memorial service to honor the donors. Your family members will be invited to this touching ceremony that helps give closure to students and families alike.

How Do I Sign Up?

If interested, please contact the administrator of the Anatomical Donor Program, Mr. Jack Ventimiglia, at the address shown on the following page. You need to fill out an information form and have an affidavit notarized in order to be registered in our program. If you prefer, we can have them mailed to you.

Jack Ventimiglia, RN

Administrator, Anatomical Donor Program

Department of Pathology & Cell Biology

Columbia University College of Physicians & Surgeons

630 West 168th Street

New York, NY 10032

212-305-3600

anatomic-gift@columbia.edu (<mailto:anatomic-gift@columbia.edu>)

Forms:

Donor Information Form (fill out and email to anatomic-gift@columbia.edu (<mailto:anatomic-gift@columbia.edu>). Or mail to the above address

Donor Affidavit (this form must be notarized and mailed to the above address)

Columbia University

630 West 168th Street New York,

NY 10032 United States