



COMMON QUESTIONS ABOUT WHOLE-BODY DONATION

The answers below refer to the Gift Body Program of the Kansas University of Medicine and Biosciences. Other programs differ in some details, but their general structure is usually very similar to that of KCUMB.

When do arrangements for body donations need to be made?

Requisite paper work is typically completed before death. The paperwork may also be completed by immediate next of kin at the time of death. In either case, the donor must meet certain criteria for medical study. Extensive trauma to the body may preclude the university from accepting the donation. The donation will not be accepted if the donor is infected with HIV, hepatitis B, hepatitis C, methicillin-resistant staphylococcus aureus (MRSA), staph, VRE, or syphilis. The university may not accept a donor who is obese due to equipment limitations.

How does an anatomical gift help the medical students at KCUMB?

KCUMB has a need for anatomical donations in order to carry out educational studies. This program, established in the early 1960s, has advanced the osteopathic medical education of thousands of students. The program allows future physicians to learn about the inner workings of the human body in an up-close, personally meaningful way that otherwise would not be possible.

Does making an anatomical donation conflict with religious views?

Most religions do not object to anatomical donation. However, following the completion of medical study, cremation is required. If you are in doubt about donating or cremation, consult a religious counselor of your faith.

What expenses are involved?

KCUMB pays for transportation of the gift body to the campus facility from locations within Greater Kansas City. The family or the deceased's estate is responsible for transportation expenses outside a 100-mile radius.

What happens to the body when medical study is complete?

Upon completion of educational studies, the body is cremated and the ashes may be returned to the family if desired. Cremated remains may be returned via registered mail to a cemetery, funeral home, or family member. The donor has the option of having the cremated remains interred at the university-owned gravesite at Park Lawn Cemetery in Kansas City, Mo.

How long will the body be at KCUMB for medical study?

The amount of time the body remains at KCUMB depends on the time of year the donation is received. Typically, the body will be at the university for 12 to 18 months, with a maximum of two years.

Can a donor change his or her mind, and choose not to donate after registering?

Yes, at any time. Donors may rescind their donation by notifying KCUMB's Department of Anatomy in writing. In the event that the family wishes to end the donation commitment early, the program policy requires that the body will be cremated before being returned to the family.

Should the body be embalmed?

Donated bodies may *not* be embalmed before being received by the university. KCUMB works directly with an embalmer whose specialized processes are required for long-term study.

Is it possible to donate organs?

While donation of the corneas is acceptable, donation of other organs would disqualify an individual from donating to the Gift Body Program. The organs must remain in the body for study, instruction, and research.

Can an autopsy be performed?

Medical study requires that the body be intact at the time of donation. Due to the invasiveness of the autopsy procedure, the donated body could not be fully used for medical study.

If a donor has undergone surgery, can an anatomical donation be made?

Yes. The program accepts individuals who have undergone surgical procedures. These findings provide significant learning opportunities for students.

Is there an age limit for making a body donation?

The donor must be over the age of 18, and there is no upper-age limit. Students benefit from seeing the results of normal aging, cancer, dementia, etc.

Will it be possible to receive a report of medical findings, cause of death, or details about the specific studies?

Anatomic observations are recorded in the donor's file and available upon request, but a cause of death cannot be determined. Anatomy labs are used for educational rather than diagnostic purposes.

How does KCUMB honor those who have made an anatomical donation?

The students and faculty at KCUMB are grateful for gift bodies and always treat the donors with the utmost respect. The university hosts a memorial service annually. The donor's family receives notification of the date and time of the ceremony.

Should donation wishes be included in a will?

Including donation intentions in a will is not required, but it legally reinforces the donor's wishes to the heirs of the estate. The paperwork completed by the donor is a legal document that states the donor's wishes to participate in the Gift Body Program.

VISIT: www.funeralskc.org
EMAIL: fca.gkc@gmail.com
CALL: 816-561-6322
WRITE: P.O. Box 7021
Kansas City, MO 64113

