

DIVISION OF ANATOMY
Department of Surgery University of Toronto

DONATING ONE'S BODY FOR ANATOMICAL STUDY & MEDICAL RESEARCH

INTRODUCTION

Many people wish to bequeath their bodies for anatomical studies and medical research, thereby making a unique contribution to the advancement of medicine. In recognition of this wish, The Trillium Gift of Life Network Act (2002) allows for such bequeathals, provided that there is no objection by the next-of-kin or executor at the time of death.

If you are considering bequeathing your body to the Division of Anatomy at the University of Toronto, this booklet provides the necessary information. You may also contact the Willed Body Program Coordinator at 416-978-2692 or at willedbodyprogram@utoronto.ca

RESPECT FOR THE DEAD

Persons who bequeath their bodies to the University of Toronto and their families may be assured that all human remains are afforded the dignity and respect that society customarily grants to the dead. Students are fully aware of the special privilege granted to them by law, and the obligation they have to conduct themselves in a professional manner during their anatomical studies.

HOW TO ARRANGE THE DONATION OF YOUR BODY

Most people who wish to bequeath their bodies to the University quite naturally think of including a statement like the following in their Wills:

"Upon my death, I direct that my body, if acceptable and needed for anatomical studies and medical research, be delivered to the Division of Anatomy at the University of Toronto (or to the nearest School of Anatomy)."

Writing such a statement in a Will, however, does **not** ensure that your wishes will be carried out because cremation and/or burial often take place before the Will is read. **In order that your wish be followed we suggest that you complete Part I of the enclosed Donation Consent Form.** Upon completion of Part I, return the original copy to:

Division of Anatomy
1 King's College Circle
Room 2374
University of Toronto
Toronto, Ontario, M5S 1A8

A copy should be retained and be readily available to your next-of-kin or executor. We will be happy to acknowledge receipt of the signed donation form but we will do this only if you specifically make this request. Please be aware that it may take up to 8 weeks for you to receive the acknowledgement. You are strongly advised to discuss your wishes with your next-of-kin or executor, or any other person(s) likely to be in charge of your body at the time of death. It is recommended that this be done while you and your family are in good health. The time factor is crucial, and your next-of-kin or executor must be in a position to act immediately following your death.

If, at the time of your death, Part I of the Donation Consent Form has not for some reason been sent to the Division, your intentions can still be honoured. In this case, Part II of the Form should be completed by your next-of-kin or executor and returned to the Division.

You may wish to consult an appropriate spiritual advisor to clarify the views of your religion concerning this act of dedication. Such consultation will enable them to guide your family at the time of death and to arrange a memorial service **without the presence of the body**, should this be your desire.

AT THE TIME OF DEATH

Your next-of-kin or executor should **contact MacKinnon and Bowes Ltd. at: 416-465-7508 OR 1-800-268-6736** (available 24 hours a day).

If the body is acceptable for anatomical studies, MacKinnon and Bowes Ltd. will make the necessary arrangements for transportation of the body from the place of death to the Division of Anatomy at the University of Toronto. **Transportation, documentation and administrative charges set out by MacKinnon and Bowes Ltd. are the responsibility of the estate of the deceased, next-of-kin or executor and will be invoiced accordingly by MacKinnon and Bowes Ltd., the transportation service provider.** Please contact MacKinnon and Bowes Ltd. for more information.

When death occurs outside Ontario or beyond a radius of 700 kilometers of Toronto, the body may not be accepted by the Division because of transportation concerns related to the shipping of an unembalmed body. **In such cases, the next-of-kin or executor may wish to contact a School of Anatomy that is closer to the deceased in order to bequeath the body.**

There are occasions when the bequeathed body may not be suitable for study in the Division. **THE DIVISION RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REFUSE A BODY.** The Division will not accept a body until it has been examined to determine if it is suitable for anatomical studies. This determination will take place at the time of death, **prior** to removal from the place of death for delivery to the Division.

Bodies on which autopsies have been performed, or which have been embalmed, will not be accepted. Bodies will also not be accepted if organs, other than the eyes, have been removed at the time of death for any reason. In addition, the body of a person who has died of certain infectious or neurological diseases; has undergone a recent extensive surgical procedure; has had radioactive seeds implanted, or who exceeds acceptable height and weight ratio limits, may not be accepted. Excessive edema or extended time since death are also reasons that may deem a body unacceptable for donation. This is not an exhaustive list of reasons for refusal. There is no upper age limit for the donation of a body. In the event that the body cannot be used for anatomical studies, alternate plans will have to be made with a Funeral Director by the next-of-kin or executor.

MEMORIAL SERVICES AND DEATH NOTICES

A funeral service of the usual sort is not possible when a body is donated because it must be sent without delay, and unembalmed, to the Division of Anatomy. If a service is desired at this time, it is strongly recommended that it take the form of a Memorial Service **without the presence of the body**.

There is no need for secrecy on the part of relatives or friends about the donation to the Division of Anatomy. They may wish to recognize the generosity and desire of the deceased by including a statement in the obituary notice to the effect that the body has been donated to the Division of Anatomy at the University of Toronto for anatomical studies.

UNIVERSITY MEMORIAL SERVICE & COLLECTION OF CREMATED REMAINS

Anatomical study and/or research in the Division of Anatomy is usually complete within **one to three** years after receipt of the body. The cremated remains may be collected by the next of kin/executor *or* interred in the University of Toronto plot at St. James' Cemetery and Crematorium in Toronto. A live or virtual memorial service is held each year. When in person, it is attended by relatives and friends, as well as faculty, staff and students of the Faculty of Medicine. Each donor's remains are identified and kept separate. Appropriate records are maintained at St. James' Cemetery and at the Division of Anatomy.

All expenses for cremation and burial by the University are paid for by the Division of Anatomy. A private burial of the cremated remains can be planned by the family if the next-of-kin or executor directs the Division to return the cremated remains to a designated person for this purpose. All expenses of a private burial will be the responsibility of the estate of the deceased.

No monuments or other grave markers are permitted in the University section of the Cemetery because of agreements concerning perpetual care. However, the site is marked by a single stone that bears the following inscription:

"Here lie the cremated remains of those who, in the interests of others, donated their bodies to medical education and research. The University of Toronto deeply appreciates their generosity and marks this place to honour their memory."

ANATOMICAL RESEARCH FUND

The Anatomical Research Fund was established in 1977 to advance medical science and the training of teacher-scientists in the anatomical sciences. Donations to this Fund have been received from persons who have included a statement in their Will concerning a bequest to the Fund and also from relatives and friends who wish to make a contribution in memory of a loved one. The Anatomical Research Fund is administered by the University of Toronto and receipts for income tax purposes are issued. Cheques should be made payable to the Anatomical Research Fund, University of Toronto and mailed to:

Division of Anatomy
1 King's College Circle
Room 2374
University of Toronto
Toronto, Ontario
M5S 1A8

DONATION OF TISSUES AND ORGANS

Many individuals wish to donate their eyes, kidneys, hearts, livers, lungs, bones, joints and skin to those in need of transplants. The donation of organs and tissues is a selfless gift that provides untold direct benefits to people in need. If you wish to consider organ donation, please contact the Trillium Gift of Life Network at 1-877-363-8456 (www.giftoflife.on.ca) to get your Gift of Life Donor Card.

However, should you choose to make the gift of donating any organs other than your eyes, whole body donation will not be possible. To donate your eyes, in addition to whole body donation, please contact the Trillium Gift of Life Network at 1-877-363-8456.

To request additional copies of this booklet please call 416-978-2692 or email willedbodyprogram@utoronto.ca.

This information is also available at <https://surgery.utoronto.ca/willed-body-program>.