“These individuals have been pivotal to the enhancement of our education, and we feel incredibly humbled that they selflessly taught us the beginnings of our healthcare careers.”

–Krysta Schroeder, DPM Class of 2017
The ability of Des Moines University to provide highly trained physicians and other health care professionals depends upon continued public support of the Body Donor Program. In order to educate present and future students, the University must obtain donated bodies to fulfill the needs of medical education.

A special law permitting persons to deed their bodies for scientific purposes was enacted by the Iowa Legislature in 1953, thereby establishing a means for Iowans to make this ultimate gift. Those who donate their bodies for medical education have the satisfaction of knowing they are making an indispensable contribution to the basic knowledge upon which medical education depends. The donors realize even that in death, they can continue to serve the living. Body donation is, indeed, the ultimate gift of human concern.

If you decide to contribute your body to science, please be aware of the following information:

**Funeral Home** - A funeral home must be involved during the donation process. They will help prepare the necessary documents and deliver the body to the University at the time of death. If desired, the survivors may wish to hold a viewing or a funeral service before the body is delivered to the University. Any expenses incurred with the funeral home will be the responsibility of the family.

**Delivery** - If the body can be delivered within eight hours from the time of death, the University will proceed with the embalming procedure. However, if the body cannot be delivered within eight hours of death, we request that the funeral home proceed with arterial embalming only. The cost of embalming performed by a funeral home will be the responsibility of the donor's family.

**Costs** - The Uniform Anatomical Gift Law prohibits medical schools from purchasing human remains. The University will reimburse funeral homes for transportation in the amount of $75 plus $0.45 per mile, up to a maximum total of $300 once a death certificate is received from the funeral home. The University reserves the right to change the fee paid to the funeral homes at any time and without notification.

**Organ donation** - Eyes can be donated to the Iowa Lions Eye Bank in Iowa City.

**Refusal of donation** - Most bodies are acceptable for the Body Donor Program. However, the donation may not be accepted if any of the following conditions are present: organs or parts removed for transplantation, autopsy performed, decomposition, homicide, drowning, burning, vehicular accident, suicide, trauma, jaundice, emaciation, obesity, emaciation, body contractures, or the presence of a contagious disease such as Hepatitis or HIV. At the time of death, the donor must have an average height to weight ratio and be cleared of any infectious diseases. In all cases, the University reserves the right to determine acceptability of a potential donation.

**Anatomical Studies** - Studies of anatomical donors are for educational and research purposes only. No legal findings will be determined nor will a report be given upon completion of the study. Generally, most studies are concluded within two years.

**Treatment of bodies** - All students fully appreciate that they are the principal beneficiaries of the generosity of those who donate. During medical studies, donated bodies are treated with utmost respect. Students are closely supervised by faculty members. A full time Anatomical Coordinator cares for and maintains the remains during the duration of the scientific study.

**Disposition of bodies** - The Body Donor Program will send correspondence to the next-of-kin regarding the disposition of the remains. If cremation is desired, the process will commence following the anatomical studies at the expense of the University. If a request for return of the cremated remains has not been made, the remains will be interred by the University following 60 days from the notification of the next-of-kin. If cremation is not desired, the body can be returned to a funeral home for burial. Please contact the Body Donor Program for special instructions if the remains are not to be cremated. The expense for returning uncremated remains and burial, cremated or uncremated, will be the responsibility of the family.

**Memorial** - An interdenominational memorial service is held each spring for relatives. The expense for this burial and memorial service is borne by the University. A granite tombstone or plaque, provided by the University, marks the burial site and is inscribed, “Here lie the remains of those individuals who bequeathed their bodies to the betterment of science and mankind.”
**MAKING A DONATION**

If you have decided to donate your body to the University for scientific study, simply complete the enclosed pages and mail or email them to the contact information below:

**Body Donor Program**  
**Des Moines University**  
**3200 Grand Avenue**  
**Des Moines, Iowa 50312**  

**Email:** bodydonor@dmu.edu

Then complete the information section on this page and keep this brochure for your reference. It is suggested that you place this with your important papers and inform your next-of-kin and funeral director of your decision. Upon receipt, your forms will be reviewed to ensure the information provided meets the criteria established for our Body Donor Program. If the criteria is met, a laminated identification card will be mailed to you. This card signifies that you are a body donor and ensures that your remains will be handled appropriately for purposes of medical study. If criteria is not met, you will be informed by mail of this decision.

If at some time you decide against participating in the Body Donor Program, simply destroy your wallet identification card and inform the University and your relatives of your decision. Legal custodians may donate a body; however, donation cannot be made against expressed wishes of the deceased. Also, the University is inclined to refuse acceptance of a body if there is objection to donation or disension among family members legally responsible for disposition of the body.

Body donation has been approved and is encouraged by Catholic, Protestant and Reformed Jewish leaders. However, you may wish to discuss this matter with your priest, minister or rabbi.

The University realizes that body donation is a personal, private decision. If you have concerns or questions, please contact the Anatomical Coordinator for the Body Donor Program, Des Moines University, 3200 Grand Avenue, Des Moines, Iowa 50312-4198. You may call the Body Donor Program at (515) 271-1481, 24 hours a day, seven days a week or email them at bodydonor@dmu.edu.

---

**Keep this brochure for your records.**

The following was provided on __________ (date) to:

**ADDRESS:** Des Moines University  
Department of Anatomy  
3200 Grand Avenue  
Des Moines, Iowa 50312-4198  
**PHONE:** (515) 271-1481  
**EMAIL:** bodydonor@dmu.edu  
**WEBSITE:** www.dmu.edu/body-donor

In the hope that I may help others, I hereby direct that my body be delivered after my death to Des Moines University for the purpose of medical study without restriction. This ID does not imply commitment to accept the body at time of death.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Signature of donor</th>
<th>Date of birth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Address of donor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Witness</td>
<td>Witness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date signed</td>
<td>Date signed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funeral home</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

“I have witnessed first-hand what an irreplaceable gift body donation is to a future physician. I also know what it feels like to be family of a donor - my grandfather was a donor and my grandmother will be a donor. At the time my grandparents willed their bodies to DMU, I think they felt peace knowing that so much good could come from their death.

As a student, I have seen just how true that is.”

– Sarah Tallman, D.O. Class of 2009
The ‘ultimate gift’

BY JULIE POWELL-MOH

THERE IS PROBABLY NO TIME IN OUR LIVES WHEN we so deeply need others to comfort and understand us than at the time of death of someone we love. In the weeks before my husband left, I wanted words to go away, didn’t want to hear end-of-life words. I wanted to simply absorb all that he was. I didn’t know then how comforting it would be to have his story continue here.

Wendell knew he wanted to be a body donor. In the weeks before his death, we began to talk about the specifics. I called Des Moines University, and Clay Carlson, DMU’s anatomical coordinator, came to the house to talk with us. I didn’t know what to expect—couldn’t imagine a more difficult conversation, yet he handled it with such grace and reassurance. Both Wendell and I were comforted. Clay had a presence that went way beyond an exchange of information and answers to our questions—it was relational and pastoral. That healing presence has continued each time I’ve talked with him over the past five years. He listened. He offered resources. Wendell was grateful for that, and I continue to be grateful. It made our decision somehow sacred.

But I didn’t know just how sacred it was until the memorial service at DMU. To hear Dante Samuel’s voice break when he talked about standing each day beside his quiet professor and to know his sadness when he had to say goodbye—that was a holy moment. To hear Timothy Clem talk about losing his father, that they had talked about everything related to his father’s brain tumor but had said nothing about what would happen after his death, then he thanked the families of the donors for having those hard conversations.

To hear another student do the math to illustrate how far-reaching the donor decision really is: She told us that her experience with her donor will inform every patient visit, every patient decision over the span of her career—so here is the math: Every student will see approximately 5,000 patients a year. I checked that number with my clinic. Over a career of 40 years, each student will see 200,000 patients. Three hundred seventy-one students this year have worked with donors. Over their careers, they will see 74,200,000 patients. This year’s donors alone will impact the lives of 74 million people. I hadn’t imagined.

But the ultimate gift of the memorial service was to see and feel all the students in their white jackets sitting behind us, surrounding us like angels. I felt as though I were sitting in the lap of God. I loved it that they brought their music and their art and their words to us. My tears were healing.

The students’ presence didn’t end with the memorial service. They stayed after, serving cake and coffee, talking with us. They introduced themselves, shared more stories. They seemed to know the value of the human touch, to understand that healing is about something much greater than a course of study. How lucky we are to have them entering the health care professions.

I am forever grateful for Wendell’s decision to be a donor and for the way Des Moines University staff and students have honored that. I often think of his being a part of the young men and women who were students here. I think of him teaching them how to be the very best health care professionals. In life, he was a wonderful teacher, and I love how that continues.

Wendell wanted to be a donor. I had not made that decision for myself. But the students’ stories were so compelling. And today DMU has my donor bequest on file. I cannot think of any greater final gift.

Des Moines resident Julie Powell-Mohr spoke at DMU’s annual memorial service, on May 17, that honors individuals who donate their bodies to the University. Her husband, Wendell, a watercolor artist, died of prostate cancer in 2008. To learn more about DMU’s body donor program, visit www.dmu.edu/body-donor, call 515-271-1481, or email them at bodydonor@dmu.edu.