

Anatomical GIFT PROGRAM

Frequently Asked Questions

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WHAT IS WHOLE BODY DONATION?

Whole body donation means that a person has made an informed decision to donate their body after death to healthcare education or research. Donation for the foundation of healthcare provider education acknowledges that whatever the potential benefits, the human body needs to be treated with dignity and respect.

WHAT IS ORGAN DONATION?

Organ donation is the procurement of healthy organs and tissues from one person for transplantation into another. Organ donation is different from anatomical donation and one cannot both donate one's organs and donate one's body. The Anatomical Gift Program at Elon University (AGP) facilitates whole body donation.

WHY SHOULD I CONSIDER DONATING MY BODY?

The unique and priceless gift of the human body provides the opportunity for building knowledge that is the foundation of healthcare education. Whole body donations at Elon are used to teach undergraduate biology and nursing students who are interested in pursuing graduate degrees in healthcare and graduate students in physical therapy, occupational therapy and physician assistant studies. The need for donations is great, and the gift is valued and honored beyond measure.

WHO CAN DONATE?

Any competent resident of North Carolina eighteen (18) years of age or older may become a potential donor. There is no upper age limit.

WHO CANNOT DONATE?

Elon University cannot guarantee acceptance of a donated body. Acceptance of an anatomical gift is contingent upon the decision of the Anatomical Gift Program at the time of death of the registered donor. Elon University may not be able to accept a donated body for any number of reasons including but not limited to the following:

- Organs or parts (other than the corneas of the eyes) have been removed at or following the time of death, such as for transplantation or in an autopsy;
- Decomposition of the body prior to embalming;
- Severe trauma, such as death from drowning, burning, homicide, suicide, or motor vehicle accident;
- Deep and open wounds;
- Diseases such as COVID, HIV/AIDS, hepatitis B, hepatitis C, tuberculosis or a Prion disease;
- The individual is morbidly obese as determined by the Anatomical Gift Program; and
- The condition of pathology of the remains precludes safe preparation, storage, or study.

Depending on the need of the program and any other circumstances that may arise at the time of death, the Anatomical Gift Program may decline a donor. Therefore, alternate arrangements should be made known to the donor's Executor or next of kin.

CAN ANYONE REVOKE MY CONSENT TO DONATE MY BODY?

A donor may revoke an anatomical gift at any time by notifying the Anatomical Gift Program in writing. Anyone else may revoke the donor's gift only at the direction of the donor if the donor is physically unable to sign pursuant to G.S. § 130A-412.8.

WHAT IS THE BENEFIT OF WHOLE BODY DONATION VERSUS ORGAN DONATION?

Organ donation is useful and beneficial for implantation purposes. By putting your name on the Donate Life NC Online Registry, you consent to having your organs, eyes/corneas and/or tissue made available for transplantation upon death.

Whole bodies are constantly needed for teaching in healthcare education. This unique and priceless gift of the human body provides the opportunity for knowledge acquisition that is foundational for all healthcare provider

education. There is usually little or no expense for the family when death occurs. Body donation may be an economical as well as thoughtful and generous choice.

WHAT HAPPENS TO MY BODY WHILE AT ELON UNIVERSITY?

Anatomical donors provide a unique learning experience for our students at both McMichael Science Center and the Gerald L. Francis Center in the University's human anatomy laboratories. Both labs are located on campus at Elon University in Elon, North Carolina. Elon University supports other vetted healthcare institutions of higher learning. Registered donors may also teach at these previously approved institutions and then are returned to Elon for cremation and subsequently received by the designee of record.

WHO HAS ACCESS TO ANATOMICAL DONATIONS?

Teaching faculty in physical therapy education, physician assistant studies, occupational therapy and nursing, as well as undergraduate students enrolled in human anatomy courses have access to anatomical donations. In addition, clinicians, including EMT's, PT's, PA's, MD's, OT's and PTA's from the surrounding community attend continuing education sessions to review the anatomy with faculty from the PT, PA and nursing departments. All anatomy laboratories have restricted access through the use of key codes and only those students who are enrolled in these programs have access.

WHAT HAPPENS AT THE TIME OF DEATH?

When possible, the registered donor's executor or designated next of kin should call the Anatomical Gift Program when death is imminent. This advance notification will permit a preliminary assessment, which will expedite the process when death occurs.

Upon death, the executor or designated next of kin must notify the Anatomical Gift Program immediately. The 24-hour access telephone number is 336-207-3813. Once accepted, the donor's body must be received within 24 hours of the time of death unless other arrangements have been approved by an authorized AGP staff member.

Once a body has been accepted by the Anatomical Gift Program, blood will be drawn by members of our staff and sent to LabCorp (www.viromed.com) for the testing of infectious diseases. If the results are reactive (positive) for HIV/AIDS, hepatitis B, hepatitis C, or West Nile Virus, the results may be reported to the local health department in the North Carolina county where death occurred (G.S. § 103A-140). If the body is positive for any of the aforementioned infectious diseases, the body will be cremated immediately at the expense of the Anatomical Gift Program.

WHAT HAPPENS IF I LIVE ALONE?

It is suggested that once death is imminent that relatives and friends are notified that the individual is registered with Elon's Anatomical Gift Program. Place the Elon 'notification' sticker in a visible spot. Request regular 'check-in's'. This information should also be shared wtih the healthcare provider.

AFTER DEATH, WHAT PAPERWORK NEEDS TO BE COMPLETED?

Once Elon's AGP has accepted the donor, the executor or next of kin may post an obituary in the newspaper of choice. For further verification, the respective newspaper may contact the AGP. The services of a funeral home are not required to place an obituary. Copies of the death certificate may be needed for attorneys, financial advisors, insurance, banks and other agencies. While our AGP files the death certificate, extra copies of the death certificate may be needed for attorneys, financial advisors, insurance, banks and other agencies. These extra copies can be obtained from the Register of Deeds office where death occurred or online at vitalrecords.nc.gov. Please allow one week before making a request. The donor's death will be reported to the Social Security Administration. All other accounts and affairs are the responsibility of the estate or other named responsible party.

Elon University's Anatomical Gift Program does not provide death certificates. As part of our responsibilities, we gather and verify the information needed to complete the death record and submit the required documentation to the appropriate authorities. Families and estate representatives who need certified copies of the death certificate may purchase them directly from the appropriate Register of Deeds office.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER DEATH?

The study of the human body is an indispensable part of the education of healthcare providers. The AGP may keep a donor's body for up to 2 years. There are no viewing hours. At the completion of studies, a memorial service is held on campus. The donor can specify family or friends to receive invitations to the memorial service.

WILL MY NAME BE KNOWN AND IF SO TO WHOM?

Donors may choose to remain anonymous or select use of their first name, or surname for use by faculty and students who will work with them. These choices are made by the donor registrant on the Health History Form.

WHAT ARE THE COSTS?

North Carolina law prohibits payment for a body donation. The Anatomical Gift Program at Elon University pays for the following:

- Serology testing
- Preparation for educational studies
- Filing a death certificate
- Obtaining a burial transit permit
- Transportation within North Carolina
- Serology testing
- Cremation
- Return of cremated remains

Any other costs associated with death are handled by the donor's estate. Typically, the donor's estate pays for:

- The obituary
- Copies of the death certificate
- Private burial arrangements

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN STUDIES INVOLVING THE DONATION ARE COMPLETE?

When studies are complete, the donor's remains are cremated and released to the individual indicated on the donor consent form, as designated by the donor. Any individual designated by the donor to receive the cremated remains may make an appointment with the AGP to personally receive them or may make a written request for the delivery of the cremated remains. The individual picking up or receiving the cremated remains must provide photo identification matching his or her name on the consent form.

WILL MY FAMILY RECEIVE A REPORT OF ANATOMICAL FINDINGS?

No. The anatomical gift is to teach our students human anatomy. It is suggested to make arrangements with the registrant BEFORE death and determine information through legal processes with the registrant's physician.

WHAT IS THE MEMORIAL SERVICE OR SERVICE OF THANKSGIVING?

Each year, Elon University's Anatomical Gift Program holds a service to honor all donors from that year. Family members are invited and welcomed at the service. Faculty, staff, and students are also invited. The service provides an opportunity for students to express their appreciation of the donors to the donors' families. The memorial service is a time for students and families to come together and find closure and comfort.

WHAT ARE THE LAWS FOR SCATTERING ASHES IN NORTH CAROLINA?

As the cremation rate increases, more people are opting to scatter loved one's remains. State law in North Carolina permits for the scattering of cremated remains on private land (with the written consent of the landowner). Ashes may also be scattered over any uninhabited public land, public waterways or at sea, subject to health and environmental standards. If you scatter the ashes yourself, the general guidance is to scatter at least 100 yards from any road, trail, body of water or developed facility. Some suggest it is advisable to be comfortable regarding the irreversible decision to scatter ashes. Alternatively, some may choose to keep a small amount of ashes in a keepsake urn or memento. Family members of donors are invited and welcome to attend the service of thanksgiving. Invitations will be sent to the individual identified as next of kin on the donor registration packet.

CAN I FIND INFORMATION ABOUT ELON UNIVERSITY'S ANATOMICAL GIFT PROGRAM ONLINE?

Yes, please visit our website: **www.elon.edu/anatomical-gift**