

MIDWESTERN UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY CONNECTION

NEWS FROM THE
MIDWESTERN
UNIVERSITY
BODY DONATION
PROGRAM

WINTER 2019

From the Director's Desk

We've had an exciting year at Midwestern University (MWU) Body Donation Program, made possible by the generosity of our community of registered body donors and their families. More than 800 medical and health professions students benefit from cadaver-based anatomy instruction each year. Anatomy courses are crucial to students' medical education and form the groundwork for their future clinical careers. As our students' first patients, body donors help develop compassion and empathy while teaching students about the wonder and individuality of the human body. In November, we also welcomed a new Assistant Director to the program. Jim Edmundson is a licensed funeral director who comes to us with many years of experience in the mortuary industry. Welcome, Jim!

The MWU anatomical laboratories also contributed to educational workshops and career days in which local high school students learned about anatomy, their own health, and health careers. The ability to share anatomical science and the human body allows young students to develop their interest in human science. MWU anatomical laboratories also participated in the continuing education of many local healthcare providers, including emergency department doctors, first responders, and nurse

anesthetists, by allowing providers to practice life-saving techniques.

The MWU Body Donation Program continues to educate the community about the importance of anatomical study for health professionals and students. We contributed to health expert columns in Arizona Health & Living magazine, presented a free seminar at the Glendale Foothills Library, and visited several local events and organizations. We appreciate the interest in our program and the kind response from the community.

We are continually grateful for your support and for your generous contribution to tomorrow's healthcare team.

Heather F. Smith, Ph.D.

*Associate Professor,
Department of Anatomy and
Director, Midwestern University
Body Donation Program*



*Left to Right: April Cornejo, Dr. Heather Smith,
and Jim Edmundson*

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MIDWESTERN UNIVERSITY
BODY DONATION PROGRAM
Tomorrow's Healthcare Team

Health Careers Institute Teaches High School Students about Anatomy and Healthcare Careers

Since 1997, Midwestern University has hosted the Health Careers Institute (HCI), an interactive 8-day educational adventure for local high school juniors and seniors focusing on careers in the healthcare field. Only 48 students are selected from more than 100 applications from some of the best and brightest high school students in Arizona. HCI attendees experience hands-on labs featuring Midwestern University's graduate healthcare disciplines, including osteopathic medicine, pharmacy, dental medicine, optometry, veterinary medicine, podiatry, occupational and physical therapy, clinical psychology, speech-language pathology, nurse anesthesia, biomedical sciences, and cardiovascular profusion.

Midwestern University faculty, staff, and students all volunteer to conduct lectures, hands-on labs, and activities to help pique attendees' interest in the health sciences and medical careers. The high school students participate in an interactive anatomy workshop held in the anatomical laboratories. Fascinated students group up to study the anatomy of a heart, brain, and lungs, guided by eager medical students. They see firsthand the visible impact of smoking and pollution on lung tissue and variation in human heart size. For many students, this stage in their education is a formative time when they start to plan their future career paths. The anatomical laboratories are honored to participate in this annual educational community event.



Primary Benefits of Body Donation

Here are a few benefits of whole body donation that you may not have considered.

1. You will leave a lasting legacy by advancing medical education.

Anatomy (the study of the human body) is the keystone subject upon which all future clinical courses for medical and healthcare students will build. Learning anatomy from a human cadaver is an unparalleled experience that provides the next generation of healthcare providers with an intimate connection with human anatomy that no simulation can offer. The body donor becomes the students' first patient and most important teacher.

2. Your family can feel comfort knowing your wishes in advance.

Donors to Midwestern University Body Donation Program may pre-register at any point in their lives (after age 18). Donors receive a complete packet of information to share with their families and a donor ID card with our

contact information and instructions to carry in their wallets. Providing detailed information to your family in advance can help them plan and give them the peace of mind that comes with knowing your wishes.

3. Donors may also contribute to continuing medical education that will improve patient care in their community.

Practicing local emergency room doctors, surgeons, and other practitioners associated with Midwestern University visit our anatomical laboratories for advanced training in surgical and diagnostic procedures and to practice life-saving techniques that have direct applicability to patient care.



Perspectives on Anatomy: Midwestern University Faculty and Student Profiles



Faculty Profile:
Beth Townsend, Ph.D.,
Professor, Anatomy

Dr. Townsend has been with Midwestern University since 2008, teaching extensively in the osteopathic medical anatomy course, as well as anatomy courses for

the occupational therapy, dental, and optometry programs. These classes give students an opportunity to experience the variation in human anatomy. They offer different degrees of dissection-based anatomy experiences, from focusing on a clinically specific region for a short time period to an intensive full regional anatomy experience that spans multiple quarters.

Fun fact: Dr. Townsend is a well-known paleontologist who studies middle Eocene (42-46 million year old) mammal fossils. She has an active paleontological field site in Utah where she collects fossils each summer.

Dr. Townsend's Perspective: Because of the generosity of our body donors, I am able to guide students through the unique anatomy of each individual and the numerous variations within the human body. My role as professor is focused on giving back to the community. I believe this same sense of community is what drives those who choose or who are considering body donation. That sense of community hits home in the anatomy lab in a profound way. Because of the donor-based anatomy lab experience, students not only learn how humans differ through the incredible variation in the donors, they also learn how humans are so very similar. A structure might be larger or smaller depending on the person, but that structure 'works' the same way in each person. These experiences nourish the students' compassion, and this sense of kindness and consideration without a doubt helps to develop more well-rounded healthcare professionals.



Student Profile:
Kelsey Eaton, third-year
student, Arizona
College of Osteopathic
Medicine

Kelsey earned his bachelor's degree at University of California, Santa Barbara, where he

studied biological psychology. After excelling in his MWU Anatomy course, Kelsey worked as an anatomy teaching assistant (TA) with a class of physical therapy, physician assistant, and nurse anesthesia students. Under the supervision of Dr. Heather Smith, Kelsey and 14 other TAs assisted students with their anatomical laboratories, held review sessions, and assisted with examinations. Kelsey was awarded one of three prestigious competitive fellowship positions in osteopathic manipulative medicine. He is currently completing his clinical rotations and teaching osteopathic medical techniques to the first-year medical students.

Fun fact: Kelsey will be applying for a residency in Otolaryngology (Ear Nose & Throat) Surgery.

Kelsey's Perspective: Medical students learn a lot about the intangible aspects of medicine. We read tens of thousands of pages on the human body and discuss its mechanisms, physics, chemistry, and physiology. Dissecting cadavers in the anatomy lab gave that learning a different approach. This was health and illness on a palpable level. There is no comparison to being able to meticulously study the human body, deciphering layers of tissue, entanglement of vessels and nerves, and perfectly nestled organs. This physical interaction with the complexity that we were learning made teaching anatomy a truly special experience. It was an opportunity to help others develop critical thinking and the ability to apply their knowledge while enhancing my own. Many of us remember the first incision we make. It's a delicate skill necessary for so many of our careers, but one that fills us with trepidation. One of the many gifts that the donated bodies provide is allowing us to be ready. We learn from their bodies' stories, so that we can help our future patients continue their own stories.

Common Misconceptions About Body Donation

There are many misconceptions about body donation. If you're considering whole body donation, here are some clarifications about a few of the most common misunderstandings.

Myth 1: People with diseases such as cancer are not eligible for body donation.

At Midwestern University, our medical and health professions students benefit from learning through a variety of body donors, including those with serious health conditions. Direct observation of the effect of disease pathology on the body is an important part of our students' medical education and helps shape them into informed and compassionate doctors and healthcare providers.

Myth 2: Being a body donor means that your cremains (ashes) cannot be returned to your family.

Midwestern University Body Donation Program offers the option for donors to have their cremains returned to their families. After the period of study (approximately two years), body donors are cremated. At the request of the donor or his/her family, the donor's cremains are then returned to the family.

Myth 3: There are hidden costs associated with body donation.

At Midwestern University Body Donation Program, if the death occurs within Maricopa County, Arizona, there is no cost associated with donation for the donor, family, or estate. The program assumes all costs, including transportation, cremation, and mailing of cremains (if requested) within the United States.



We hope you have enjoyed seeing just a few of the ways that Midwestern University enriches the communities we serve. Thank you for participating in our Body Donation Program, which supports our students in the detailed study of human structure (anatomy) through the ability to study the whole human body. The integral knowledge provided by this opportunity is foundational for the education of our nation's future healthcare professionals.

We recognize the thoughtful consideration that goes into the decision to donate to our program and wish to acknowledge and express our gratitude to those individuals who generously choose to invest in the future of healthcare by making this donation. To learn more, visit www.midwestern.edu/bodydonation.



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Tomorrow's Healthcare Team

20195 North 57th Avenue | Glendale, Arizona 85308
623-806-7990 | azbodydonation@midwestern.edu