

*This information is for the family after Donor passes away – please distribute as needed.  
(2 pages – or 1 page front & back)*

**University of South Carolina  
School of Medicine  
Gift of Body Program**

**Program Contact info**

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Gift of Body Program  
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**So, what happens now?**

The body of your loved one is being transported to our facilities at the USC School of Medicine on Garners Ferry Road in Columbia. Someone with the Gift of Body Program will be getting back in touch with you shortly. If the donor has passed away after office hours (9:00 – 5:00), or on the weekend, then Program Coordinator Lisa Buchanan will be contacting the family early the next business day.

**Obituary Notice**

As soon as the transport service delivers the body of your loved one to the School of Medicine campus on Garners Ferry Road in Columbia, program personnel will fax a notification to The State Newspaper Obituary Desk, stating that the donor has passed away and has been accepted into the Gift of Body Program.

This notification allows the newspaper to take information for the obituary notice directly from the family (or Next-of-Kin Representative). The family must contact the newspaper directly at (803) 771-8452 to place the obituary notice. The newspaper will not use any information received from the Gift of Body Program, only what the family wishes to have published in the obituary notice. If the family wishes to fax in the notice information, the fax number for the State Newspaper is (803) 771-8611.

If the family wishes to have an obituary notice placed with another newspaper, whether in state or not, Ms. Buchanan will assist with that placement. Let her know the name of the newspaper and the city of publication. Ms. Buchanan will assist the family with finding the contact numbers for various newspapers as needed. If the donor passes away after the office closes on Friday, and a notice needs to be placed over the weekend in a newspaper other than the State, the family may choose to utilize the services of a local funeral home to facilitate the placement. Any fees that are incurred by the use of a funeral home will be the responsibility of the family. Likewise, if any newspapers charge a fee for the placement of a notice, that fee will be the responsibility of the family as well. This fee protocol varies from paper to paper, and can depend upon how much information the family wishes to include in the obituary notice.

**Death Certificates**

Personnel with the Gift of Body Program maintain the responsibility of arranging for the filing of the Death Certificate for the donor. This may take several days to complete as the document must have information and signatures from several sources completed before it can be filed. However, the document will ultimately be sent to the Vital Records department of the Health Department of the county where the donor passed away. Ms. Buchanan will make sure that the family has the correct phone number for the Vital Records department you will need to contact. Once the document has been filed, the family can request Certified copies of the Death Certificate, which will be needed for dealing with Social Security, Insurance, Banking Institutions, Probate, etc... Each of these institutions will require their own certified copy, but the family can get as many copies as they need from the Health Department. There is a small fee for the certified copies that is payable directly to the Health Department.

Program personnel may need to confirm or obtain certain pieces of information to order to complete the death certificate, so please be prepared to confirm the following information for the donor:

- Donor Name (including middle &/or maiden)
- Race (if Hispanic heritage, please note Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, etc...)
- Date, City & State of Birth
- Marital Status & Full name of any Surviving Spouse (with maiden name as applicable)
- Whether served in any US Armed Forces
- Social Security Number
- Usual Occupation during Career & Type of Business
- Highest Grade Completed (Education level)
- Last Legal (Street) Address (including zip code & whether inside of city limits)
- Father & Mother's full names (including middle & maiden)
- Legal Next of Kin and/or Next of Kin Representative (including address & phone #)

### **Memorial Service**

Because the Gift of Body Program does have so many donors accepted into the program each year, the University is not able to provide any kind of service for the individual donors. It is the responsibility of the family to make arrangements for any type of Memorial Service that they would like to hold for the donor. However, once a year, the medical students put together a memorial service, to show their gratitude and respect for the donors and their families. We do invite the families and other loved ones to join us at that service, which is held each year in early April. As soon as the date has been confirmed, we will send out a notice about the Memorial Service and following reception. The notice packet will include specifics on the time, date and location of these events, as well as maps detailing the site, parking & handicap availability, how to get into the city from out of town, and information about the Donor Memorial Garden which is located on the School of Medicine campus. The notification is sent out at least 4 weeks in advance so that families can make arrangements as needed to attend.

### **Return of Cremains** (cremated remains)

At the end of the "study period" with the Gift of Body Program, the School of Medicine will provide cremations for each of our donors. The University of South Carolina School of Medicine has provided the Gift of Body Program with a lovely Memorial Garden on the grounds of the School of Medicine where the cremains may be interred. However, we are aware that many families would like to have the cremains returned. Whether they wish to scatter the ashes, or already have a plot picked out, we have found that given the option, many of our families prefer to make their own arrangements for the final disposition of their loved one. For those families, we ask that they notify the Gift of Body Program within two months time of the donor's passing, that they would indeed, like the cremains returned. The notification should state the name, address and telephone number of the contact person for this purpose, as well as a secondary, back-up contact person. At the time the cremains are available, a letter will be sent via Certified Mail, with Return Receipt Requested asking for the contact person to get back in touch with the Gift of Body Program. It is at that time, that final arrangements will be made for the return of the cremains to the family. Cremains must be claimed within 90 days of notification. Cremains not claimed by family will be interred or scattered at the discretion of the School of Medicine.

Please keep in mind that families of donors who have signed up for the additional program of Polymer Preservation (permanent donation) **will not** have the option of having the cremains returned, as per prior agreement with the donor upon application to the Polymer Preservation Program.

For any other questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact the Gift of Body Program office at (803) 216-3888. Our program coordinator Lisa Buchanan will be happy to speak with you.