

## **Deeded body ceremony:**

Good afternoon. My name is Andi Lawrence and I am honored to speak on behalf of the Carver College of Medicine class of 2023. It is not lost on me that as we celebrate the gift each of your loved ones have given, you are remembering the loss of a loved one. My condolences to each of you.

Before beginning medical school, I was familiar with the deeded body program. Both my grandparents committed to deed their bodies to this program when my mom was a teenager. My grandfather's opportunity to give came in 1981 at the age of 66, long before I was born. I was aware of his gift from as early as I can remember. It was weaved into the story of his life - one of service and dedication to helping and caring for people as a doctor and in teaching his family.

It was 35 years more before my grandmother fulfilled her gift in 2015 at the age of 93. She dedicated her life to nurturing and caring for others. When my grandmother passed, I was comforted in knowing that she would continue in death the foundations of her purposeful life of caring for and helping others to learn, and that she shared this gift of giving with my grandfather.

My grandma lived with my family for four months before she passed. At the time, I had not decided that I wanted to practice medicine yet, but caring for my grandma was my first hands on patient experience. When I heard the students speaking at the ceremony, I thought of my grandma. I imagined the students who worked with my grandma and how they probably did not know she had eight kids. They did not know she was one of the first women to graduate from a four-year nursing program. They did not know how much she is missed today.

In anatomy lab this fall, when I was working with my donor, she reminded me of my grandma, both petite older women. As we learned from our donor, I thought about her life, where she may have worked, where she may have lived, the family she had and why she had chosen to donate her body. My anatomy group would discuss the things that gave us insight into her life, like her scars, or the fact that her gallbladder had been removed. We saw her painted fingernails and thought of the person who last held her hand. I cared for and learned from this woman the way I hope that other students studied and appreciated my grandma's gift.

I spent many hours with our donor in lab, learning the intricacies of the human body, but I was also learning about myself. I matured and became more serious about my role in the world and my decision to become a doctor, as I considered the selflessness and generosity of our donor.

We are grateful that your loved ones were selfless in their final wish to give their bodies to further our education. This was my first patient of medical school and I will be using the knowledge I learned for the rest of my life. A donor can teach many students, who will become nurses, dentists, physical therapists, and doctors. In their careers, the students will save and help countless lives. The impact of a donor is immeasurable.

The gift of donating one's body is the most long-lasting gift that can be given. I will not forget the gift that your loved ones gave to me and I hope to give the same gift in the future. Thank you for joining us today to celebrate the lives of all the donors and for supporting the deeded body program.