Deeded Body Memorial Service Speech – Matthew Benson, M2

1:30pm September 22nd, 2023

Oakland Cemetery, 1000 Brown St. Iowa City, IA, 52246

Welcome everyone,

My name is Matthew Benson, and I am a second-year medical student speaking on behalf of the Carver College of Medicine’s class of 2026. It is my privilege to stand here today to offer my deepest gratitude to the individuals who gifted their body to science and the advancement of medical education. I also want to thank all of you for being present here today, I realize it is not easy to have to think about a loved one who has passed away. However, I hope to offer some brightness in your day by acknowledging the profound benefit your family member had on our class.

I have been lucky enough to not only take part in the Medical Gross Anatomy and Dissection lab here at the Carver College of Medicine but also take part in the Human Anatomy and Dissection undergraduate course at Luther College in Decorah, IA. Both courses have allowed me to study anatomy more in-depth than ever before thanks to these generous donors in this deeded body program. This has allowed me to realize the significance of these educational opportunities I've received.

Because of this program I have learned anatomy better than I ever thought I would. The visual capabilities offered in this course are far superior to anything an app or textbook can provide. This program doesn’t stop there though, it has also given me a chance to strengthen my own faith in the Lord. I say this because I physically was able to see the complexities of the human body and the beautiful creation made by God. The structures I was granted the opportunity to study showed me that all the intricacies of our body are wonderfully made and assembled. However, it also showed me a piece of humanity some may overlook as part of this program. These people gifted my class and other professional student programs an insurmountable gift that I can only hope to repay in the future by fully utilizing all of what I studied to the best of my abilities to care for future patients with regards to their anatomy.

These individuals have shown me the great trait of selflessness. This term has been thrown around quite often, but I want to emphasize that I see this act that these people chose to do as the true definition of this word. They chose to not only allow myself and others to study themselves but also offer their body they lived their whole life in to science and forego having their remains be laid to rest in a cemetery before now. As Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 10:24 “No one should seek their own good, but the good of others.” I think your loved ones fulfilled their last moments guided perfectly in unison with this verse. They sought to benefit others with what they had to offer. This encounter with selflessness has made it an upmost priority of mine to embody this trait as a future physician. By offering their bodies to the future health care professionals to study, these individuals helped transform the lives of the hundreds of professionals in training but also indirectly benefited the lives of thousands to millions of patients my classmates and I will care for in the future by having knowledge and mental representation of their anatomy from our first year of medical/PA/AT/PT/and dental school.

This program has had such a profound impact on my life that I became an anatomy tutor in the lab this fall, and I hope to demonstrate all the knowledge I learned over the past year to these new incoming students this Fall and help them understand the great gift that they have received in their education. Although, all I can do now to express my thank you to these individuals, is tell all of you in attendance today. I want you to know that these people gave a gift that I will utilize and appreciate for the rest of my career and life.

Thank you.