

Good afternoon. My name is Mike Boykin and on behalf of the University of Iowa Physical Therapy Program I would like to say “thank you.” Thank you to the Carver College of Medicine and Dean Jackson, our esteemed faculty and colleagues, and most importantly, the donors and their families. Today is a day both of gratitude and remembrance.

Just the other day I was speaking to a first-year physical therapy student. She, along with her 42 classmates are in the midst of our program’s comprehensive anatomy curriculum. She told me how incredible it is to have the opportunity to learn from the donors on a weekly basis. She explained that her undergraduate institution did not have the same program in place, and she learned all of her anatomy out of a textbook and from PowerPoint slides.

This moment and sense of appreciation is shared daily across disciplines which include medical students, physician assistants, dentists, nurses, and physical therapists. Studying the foundational science of anatomy with the resources available within our program is a privilege we do not take lightly.

It is a truly a selfless act when one makes the decision in life, to serve others in death. As students, we have been the beneficiaries of incredible teachers for much of our academic careers. I can look back fondly on teachers and professors from high school, college, and throughout my time here in Iowa’s Physical Therapy program that have helped shape me into the student, practitioner, and person I am today. It is with complete confidence that I can say each of us views your loved ones in the same light.

The human body is both immeasurably complex, and (*adjective?**) beautiful. As physical therapists, we are trained in the appropriate dosing of stress, through movement and load, to elicit positive adaptations for health and performance. Our interventions are rooted in a deep understanding of the foundational sciences, with anatomy serving as a cornerstone of this platform. Yet, as important as knowing precise anatomical relationships and complex physiological responses are, they do very little without appreciating the person before you. Fortunately, your family members taught us both.

As the semester progressed, my classmates and I came to increasingly appreciate the uniqueness of our donors. Although their physical differences were apparent, we could only imagine their personalities - their likes, their dislikes, what brought them immense joy, and what led to moments of intense sorrow. The donors continued to teach us, remind us, that medicine is so much more than the sciences we categorically learn in school. It is truly and deeply about caring for the individual. I went into physical therapy to help others accomplish things they did not believe possible. The donors will help enable me to do just that.

To the families of each and every donor – thank you again. In life, these individuals served as husbands, wives, fathers, mothers, siblings, vital members of their communities, and so much more. We should all be so lucky to have had the privilege to know them as you did. It is our duty today to share that in death their contribution was invaluable.

Donating one's body to science and medicine is a gift that lives on for generations. As members of the medical field, it is now our responsibility to take this experience and deeper understanding into practice, whether that is the clinic, research, or teaching what we know to the next generation of practitioners. This is not an experience one forgets (*we will ever forget**).

So, for one last time today, but certainly not the last time we will appreciate these selfless acts, thank you, to both you and your loved ones.