

Hello! My name is Madeline Slater, and I am honored to be here speaking on behalf of the Iowa College of Dentistry Class of 2024.

I would like to start by offering my condolences to you all, as the passing of a loved one is never easy. I'd also like to express my utmost respect and admiration for each of you, for supporting your family member's choice to join the deeded body program.

When I was in high school, I had a teacher tell me and my classmates that while she hadn't attended the University of Iowa for her education yet, she would one day. Upon further conversation with her, I learned of her desire to donate her body to the University of Iowa. As I prepared to begin our journey through Gross Anatomy last spring, I reflected on these conversations with my former teacher. I remembered that she told us about how proud she was of the education Iowa had available for future health care professionals. She retired a few years ago, but she will never quit teaching; even when the time comes and she passes on, she will continue to be a teacher through the deeded body program.

Over the course of the semester, I worked with each donor in our anatomy lab. As I was studying, I often mused about what their lives entailed. What were their passions? What made them laugh? What were their careers? I connected my curiosity about their work and daily lives to fond memories of many teachers, especially the one I've spoken of today. While our donors may not have been teachers in a formal setting during their lifetime, they chose to be teachers once they passed on.

I've had many wonderful teachers throughout my scholastic career, but the donors that guided me through my anatomy course will forever be at the top of the list. Not only did each one teach me more than I could have imagined about the human body, but they also helped me to appreciate the beauty and strength that each of us possess. Through the lessons they taught me, I have deepened my capacity to be empathetic. Their generosity helped prepare me to be a compassionate health professional.

I once again want to thank each and every one of you for supporting the deeded body program. Thank you for allowing us all to know and learn from your loved ones, and for the opportunity to celebrate their lives with you today.