

Willed Body Program

Information Letter

University of Washington School of Medicine

Department of Biological Structure
Box 357420, Seattle, WA 98195-7420
Telephone (206) 543.1860
Website: uwmedicine.org/willedbody

Dear Prospective Donor:

Thank you for requesting information about donating your body to the University of Washington's Willed Body Program. We have prepared the following Information to answer any questions you may have. We understand that this letter states many conditions and refers to legal requirements. In order to fully benefit from the exceptional gift you are providing, it is important that you, your family, and the University have a mutual understanding and agreement about the donor process. Please review the following carefully. (References to "The University" refer to the University of Washington).

How do I become a registered donor to the Willed Body Program at the University?

To begin the process to donate your body after death to the School of Medicine you must completely fill out, sign and return the accompanying Donor Registration Form. When we receive your completed form we will send you an acknowledgement memo and a card that identifies you as a registered body donor and provides the phone number to call to report your death. We feel the best place to keep your Donor Registration Card is in your wallet. The form must have two witness signatures but *no notary* is required; incomplete forms will delay your registration. Please ask any questions before you sign and return this form. We want you to have a clear understanding of how the program works. NOTE: This is a registration form only, and not a guarantee into the program. We cannot guarantee in advance that your body will be accepted for donation. Page #2 of this letter explains the determination process of becoming a donor. Once you have completed and signed the Donor Registration Form send the original signed copy to us and make a copy to keep with your personal records. We recommend giving copies where applicable; to your immediate family, caregiver, medical clinic, executor of your estate, power of attorney, person helping with matters for you upon your passing, etc. If you have Organ Donor on your driver's license, it is your choice if you want to take it off, but please know that you cannot be a part of both programs; our program is whole body donation after death for medical research and education.

We encourage you to discuss your desire to donate your remains after your death with your family, this will help prevent any misunderstandings and not become a sudden unexpected plan that can develop into a stressful situation. You may also want to discuss your plans to donate your body with your physician or your attorney, if applicable.

Can I change my mind about giving my body to the University?

You can withdraw your donation at any time by a written request signed by you. Our mailing address is located at the top of this page. Also, if a potential donor family member doesn't call us at the time of death, the donation is effectively canceled.

Can the family request an early return of the remains once a donor is in our program?

Unless the remains are requested by the Medical Examiner for legal purposes, remains may not be requested for an early return.

Is there any reason the University may not be able to accept my body?

It is important to understand and share with the family some of the reasons for which the School of Medicine may be unable to accept a donation.

The School of Medicine may refuse a body for certain legal and medical reasons or needs of the University. The reasons for which a donation may be declined include *but are not limited to*:

- The cause of death mandates intervention by the Medical Examiner as provided by state law
- Dispute by the legal next of kin to donate
- Decomposition of the body because of time or place of death
- Severe trauma to the body (car accident, fall, etc.)
- Infectious diseases, including but not limited to HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus), Hepatitis, TB (Tuberculosis), MRSA (Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus), VRSA (Vancomycin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus), C-Dif (Clostridium Difficile), Sepsis (Blood Infection), STD (Sexual Transmitted Disease), Shingles
- Significant bedsores, skin ulcers, extensive burns, gross fungal or other skin conditions
- Obesity, emaciation and edema
- Autopsied or embalmed remains
- Jaundice

- Recent surgeries and multiple illnesses
- No medical history

NOT EXCLUSIONS: Cancers, Dementia, Alzheimer Disease, Parkinson Disease, Transplants, Artificial Limbs, Pace Maker. Death With Dignity. Contact our office to answer your questions or concerns (206) 543.1860.

GOLD TEETH: For the benefit of those who may ask; we do not remove gold teeth from a deceased donor to give to the family; this is never an option.

NEEDS OF THE UNIVERSITY: The School of Medicine has a continuing need for donations to the Willed Body Program and accepts donations anywhere in Washington State *only*. There is no age limitation from 18 years and older. The Willed Body Program reviews all possibilities to utilize donations for educational or research purposes before refusing a donation.

We cannot guarantee in advance that your body will be accepted for donation. We urge you to have a backup plan and please inform your family of the donation procedures so there will be no misunderstandings in the event your donation is declined.

Does my family need to do anything after I die? Who takes care of transporting my body?

To report a death our phones are operational 24 hours a day, 7 days a week (206) 543.1860, if no answer call (206) 598.3300. We need to be notified immediately after your death. If your body is accepted, we will make all the arrangements for the transportation of your body to our facility at no cost.

We need to be called immediately after your death. This is the time when we begin our brief screening process by phone that will determine if you are a candidate for our program studies. We cannot guarantee in advance, prior to your death, if you will be accepted for donation. We do not come out to screen the body and we don't bring the body to our facility for screening; everything is done over the phone. The screening process can only take place at the time of death; it takes just a few minutes over the phone as we ask a few medical questions to anyone that has the information. This letter does list what some of the exclusions are. The screening process is to evaluate your current medical condition to determine whether you meet the criteria for study programs. Shortly after the screening process your family will be advised of the decision for acceptance/non-acceptance. If the donation is accepted we will make all arrangements for transportation of your remains to our facility. If the donation is not accepted your family will need to make private burial arrangements. We urge you to set up an alternate plan in advance and inform your family about the screening process of our program. We would like everyone to be familiar with our program as much as possible, sharing this letter with your family or the person/s handling matters for you after your passing would be very beneficial.

Transportation Costs: Effective August 31, 2015 the University of Washington pays 100% of the transportation costs.

For your donation to be considered, your death has to occur in Washington State. Under no circumstances can we accept bodies outside of Washington State regardless if you are registered with our program, or if the family offers to pay the transportation costs.

FUNERAL SERVICE - Since we need to receive your body as soon as possible, after death, this precludes a funeral service with the body. Your family, of course, may make any arrangements they desire for a memorial service. The University, however, does not pay for the cost of these services.

STUDY RESULTS - Will my family be told of anything discovered or learned about during the study of my body?

Details on how your remains have been used in the Willed Body Program are confidential and will not be disclosed to your family.

DESIGNATED STUDIES ARE NOT OPTIONAL: Specifying where or what you would like your remains are studied for is not an option. The program is for medical/surgical teaching, education, and research, and, is conducted at the discretion of the University. The program does not perform autopsies or research any specific medical conditions the donor may have had. No reports are issued or prepared.

The Death Certificate: The University will handle the processing of the death certificate and obtain the authorized signature. We do not keep copies or send copies to families. The availability of a certified death certificate can take up to 12 working days. Certified copies of a death certificate are only available at the Vital Records Facility in the County where the death occurred. For King County Vital Records the number is #206-897-4551. If you need the telephone number to order copies in another county, please contact our office for the phone number or call the King County office and they will give you the number you need.

How long could my body be retained and what are the options for burial when studies are completed?

The length of study cannot be determined in advance at the time of donation, but, can range from 2 weeks up to 3 years. At times, an organ or part from a body may be useful for teaching purposes and may be preserved so that it can be used multiple times without deterioration and more than one group of students may be able to study it. You can call our office periodically for status on when studies will be completed and we will try to give you what information we have available. If you choose to have the cremains returned for private burial, we will notify your next of kin or other designated person/s prior to sending the cremains. Cremains may also be picked up by appointment. If you choose to have your cremains buried in the UNIVERSITY'S community plot, notification will be sent to your family approximately four weeks prior to the date and time of our annual burial ceremony. THIS NOTIFICATION will be the only indication to the family that studies have been completed; the next of kin may inquire earlier by telephone. You may call our office at any time to inquire the status of studies.

IMPORTANT: PLEASE KEEP OUR OFFICE UPDATED WITH ANY CHANGES IN THE INFORMATION YOU PROVIDED ON YOUR DONOR REGISTRATION FORM - A NEW ADDRESS, CONTACT PHONE INFORMATION, NEXT OF KIN, ETC.

ALL DONATIONS are considered extremely valuable and a gift beyond measure. The length of study does not determine the value of any particular donation. The length of study depends entirely upon how, where, and, what type of study your remains are used for. Early return of your remains cannot be requested. There are two alternative procedures for the final disposition of your cremated remains; referred to as Option 1 and Option 2.

Option 1: Burial in the University community plot at Evergreen-Washelli Memorial Park involves no cost to you or to your estate. This is a community grave site marked by a plaque inscribed: "*In dedication to those who have donated their remains for the advancement of medical science and education*". Burial of available cremated remains are considered final as the cremated remains are not recoverable. The University does not place individual markers, but there is a community grave stone available at the site for engraving. When studies are completed, and the family wishes to have engraving, they can arrange this with the cemeteries business office (206) 362-5200 and at the expense of the family or estate. Engraving includes your first and last name and date of birth and death. When notification is received regarding the date and time of the annual ceremony and burial service, this is will be the only indication that studies have been completed with the donor. The next of kin or POA listed in our records may contact our office to inquire about the status a anytime. Ceremony notifications are sent approximately four weeks prior to the date. Generally, this service is held in the Fall, but this time could change. You can arrange for engraving on the community plaque **after** studies are completed.

Option 2: The available cremated remains will be sent to the person, or cemetery that the donor designates on the Donor Registration Form. Cremains are sent by USPS Priority Express Mail. The next of kin or POA will be notified by mail or phone before the cremated remains are sent. The cost of transporting your cremated remains is paid for by the University. We only send cremains to residents or cemeteries within the US, and Canada. Advanced arrangements may also be made to pick up cremains in our office. When studies are completed the annual ceremony notification will be sent 4 weeks prior to the date. This service that is generally held in the Fall, but this time could change. After studies are completed, if the family wishes to have engraving on our University's community plaque located at our grave site at Evergreen-Washelli Memorial Park, they can arrange this with the cemeteries business office (206) 362-5200 and at the expense of the family or estate. Engraving includes your first and last name and date of birth and death. Engraving can be done **after** studies are completed.

As noted above – In some cases tissues or body parts may be retained for continuing educational or research purposes, hence cremated remains, if returned to the family, may only constitute partial remains. All tissues or body parts retained by the University are ultimately cremated and buried in the University burial site at Evergreen Washelli Cemetery at its annual burial.

Evergreen-Washelli Memorial Park: The cemetery business office does not keep a list of names of University donors that are buried in the community plot or the donors in our program; this record is only with the University.

Annual Burial Ceremony

The University of Washington has an annual burial ceremony at Evergreen-Washelli Memorial Park's Chapel. The non-denominational ceremony is generally held in the Fall, but this could change. The date is decided approximately 2 months prior, and notifications go out approximately 4 weeks before the date of the ceremony. This ceremony gives the University an opportunity to show our sincere gratitude and deep appreciation to all donors and help provide closure to the beloved families who have been graciously patient and understanding during the donation process. *The annual ceremony is to bury those donor's that have recently completed studies.* Whether your loved ones cremains are buried in the community grave site or you receive

the cremains for private burial, this annual ceremony is open to everyone that would like to attend. We welcome family and friends to this beautiful service. Evergreen-Washelli Memorial Park is located at 11111 Aurora Ave. N., Seattle, WA 98133, (206) 362-5200

We are grateful to you for your generosity and thoughtfulness in considering the donation of your remains to the Willd Body Program. If you have any questions, please contact our office at (206) 543-1860.

Sincerely Yours,



Mavis Carpio Montgomery
Operations Manager

PLEASE KEEP THIS INFORMATION LETTER FOR YOUR RECORDES AND FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES –

CHECK LIST:

- I have read, understood and am in agreement with the information in this letter. I have had the opportunity to ask the Willd Body Program staff and/or management any and all questions I have. Any questions I have asked have been answered thoroughly to my satisfaction.
- I have informed my family, caregiver, adult family home, medical clinic/physician, estate executor and any other person/s that I feel should know about my decision to donate my body to the Willd Body Program after my death.
- I will provide a copy of my Donor Registration Form and Information Letter to my family and/or other person/s handling matters for me upon my death to read for informational purposes to help provide an informative understanding of how your program works.
- I have informed my next of kin or designated representative, the disposition I chose in advance for my cremated remains to be sent to when studies are completed.
- I have discussed my alternate plans for burial if my body is not accepted as a donation.
- I confirm that I have completed and signed this Donor Registration Form in its entirety and I will mail the Original signed copy.
- I confirm that I have provided 2 required witness signatures that are mandatory. I understand No Notary is required.
- I understand that it is beneficial to list a second family member (or other designee) on the Donor Registration Form in the event my first listed family member or other person/s is not available due to a medical condition, inability to contact, unexpected death, etc.
- I will keep your office updated with any changes in the information I provided on my Donor Registration Form - New address, contact phone information, next of kin, etc.
- **Reporting my death:** I have informed my family, caregiver, adult family home, personal representative, etc., that your facility is operational 24/7. The person to call to report my death can be, but are not limited to: family, hospice, caregiver, adult family home, personal representative, medical physician/nurse, social worker – I understand the screening will be done with a person that knows my medical history. Immediately after my death the number to call is (206) 543.1860. If for any reason this number is inoperable call (206) 598.3300. When the University is called, the staff/technician will ask questions regarding my medical history over the phone. The decision to accept or not accept my body will be determined shortly after the call. If accepted the transportation of my body will be arranged by the University at no cost. I've informed my family and/or my designated person/s assisting with matters; that studies can take up to 3 years and can be as short as 2 weeks. My cremains can't be requested for early return. Study categories are at the discretion of the University. Reports and findings are not shared with the family. While my body is at the University for studies or teaching, the next of kin or POA on file in the Willd Body Program office are the only person/s with whom information will be shared.
- **If my death occurs at home** my family will call Hospice if they are involved. If Hospice is not involved, I will tell my family/ or person/s assisting - to call #911. Tell the #911 operator - "This is a non-emergency call. There has been a death at a residence. The decedent has donated their body to the University of Washington for medical research and education." After #911 is called proceed to call the Willd Body Program (206) 543.1860 to begin the screening process. Our facility is operational 24/7. If for any reason this number (206) 543.1860 is inoperable call (206) 598.3300.
- **Death Certificates:** The University processes the Death certificate which can take up to 12 working days before available. To receive certified copies you will need to contact Vital Records in the County where the death occurred. Death certificates are not kept in our office. We do not supply death certificates.
- **News Paper Obituaries:** The news obituaries staff may contact the Willd Body Program office to confirm a donor in the program.

Complete, Sign, and Mail the Donor Registration Form: Mail the '*original*' signed hardcopy of the Donor Registration form. Only one signature by the prospective donor is required. If the prospective donor is "*medically*" unable to sign the Donor Registration form, the court appointed Legal Guardian, or designated person with notarized Healthcare/Medical Power of Attorney can sign in the designated signature area. A copy of the Legal Guardian document or notarized Healthcare/Medical Power of Attorney document must accompany the Donor Registration form when sending to our office.