

To all the Donors and their Families,

First and foremost, the words I will use to express my gratitude for this experience will not fully encompass how appreciative I am. The passing of a loved individual is met with many emotions. I imagine an individual's request to become a donor may not be accepted readily or fully understood as it is an unusual request. I can confidently say that my fellow students and I have great respect and gratitude for the selfless gift of each of our donors.

As a practicing nurse, I was continually in awe of how resilient the human body was and had many questions related to the structure of the human body. A great preponderance of those questions for me would be answered by looking at diagrams or reading more literature.

I decided to leave the field of nursing to pursue the PA profession. I wanted to take on a different role in eliminating or reducing the many types of suffering I have witnessed. Applying to USD was at the very top of my list as the institution has continually offered many unique learning opportunities. One of my most significant opportunities was working with donors during the didactic year of study. As soon as I knew I would study at USD, I was confident that I would learn in the best environment. I came to this conclusion because, as a nurse, I continually learned the most from my patients.

As a student, I can attest that the same direct learning has carried over into the lab. There is no better way to learn anatomy than from our donors. My classmates and I have understood the human body's complexities from our donors. Many of us have continued to stay late or even take extra time to study and learn more from our donors. What has been learned from our donors will not simply remain within the lab or be applied to an exam. The donors have equipped each student with a deeper understanding of how to care for patients. I feel deep gratitude towards all the donors as they have helped me learn anatomy this fall. I am confident that I can continually thank each donor as they will enrich my future practice and the practice of others.

Another extraordinary component of the cadaver lab is the opportunity to collaborate with various students who will go on to be medical professionals. Learning and collaborating alongside other PA, PT, and OT students is truly a gift. Each student has contributed to the learning experience, and together we have learned more than we ever thought possible. Such a multidisciplinary experience will prepare us all to continue collaborating and provide the best care for each patient.

For the remainder of this semester, I will continue to do what I have always done upon entering the lab. I take a moment to acknowledge both our donors' humanity and that my fellow students and I have been blessed with an irreplicable learning environment. I believe the lab at USD has the special capacity to teach every aspiring medical professional the importance of holistically caring for and learning from everyone we encounter.

With The Deep Respect and Appreciation,
Aaron Clemens