

To my donor and your family,

Thank you for your generous gift.

I am a nurse, studying to be a PA. I chose to become a PA instead of a Nurse Practitioner. I wanted the medical school science with anatomy lab to build on my nursing experience in order to provide exceptional medical care for my patients.

Faculty and students forewarned me the two years of PA school would be intense and difficult, but it was a challenge I fully accepted. My first unexpected and major challenge happened with my 1<sup>st</sup> anatomy exam. This exam and my grade nearly stopped me and my PA career in its tracks. With the help of my family and PA faculty, I was able to get back on the track and re-embrace the challenge.

As I did so, my donor helped me to learn and understand anatomy in ways I could not imagine if I had not had the opportunity to study alongside my donor's body. My donor provided me with hands-on learning and was a crucial link for me in closing the gap in anatomy theory. With my donor and hard work, I was able to turn my grade around.

More important than the grade though, was my donor and her family's selflessness. Your generosity reminded me about the bigger picture: that practicing medicine is not all about me, it is more than me. Your gift reminds me there is an art, not just a science, to medicine. That I am here to serve and see my patients as humans; not just as a body or a disease -- but as people with lives, and family and friends that love them. The art of medicine is about connecting on a human level with my patients and having empathy with their health concerns.

Without the generosity of my donor and her family, my PA education would not be as deep, transformative and beneficial as it has been. As I continue my journey to becoming a PA, I think back to the last time in anatomy lab when I carefully covered my donor's body. I had tears in my eyes and in that moment, I stopped to give thanks -- thanks to my 1<sup>st</sup> patient for all that she had taught me, and thanks to her family for gifting her to me so that I could learn.

I plan to carry your amazing gift in my heart as I care for my future patients. Thank you.

Heidi Hassler

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