

# Forensic Anthropology Research Center Texas State University-San Marcos Willed Body Program

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **Q: How do I will my body to science?**

A: Call Texas State University-San Marcos at 512-245-2472 or email us at [dr4n6@txstate.edu](mailto:dr4n6@txstate.edu) and request that we send body donation forms to you. Upon receipt, complete the forms, have it witnessed, and return the originals to the Forensic Anthropology Research Facility to Stephanie Sonnier, College of Liberal Arts, 601 University Dr., San Marcos, TX 78666.

### **Q: When a person dies, what does the family do?**

A: At the time of death, the family will call the Director of the Forensic Anthropology Research Center at 512-245-2472. Let the Director know that a pre-willed arrangement was made by the deceased, or that the nearest surviving relative wishes to make a donation to the Forensic Anthropology Research Facility at Texas State University in San Marcos, Texas.

### **Q: What if I live outside of San Marcos city limits, will you still pick up the body?**

A: Yes. We will provide for transportation of the body from any point; however, the Forensic Anthropology Research Facility will assume the cost for transportation within a 100 mile radius of the Texas State University, located at 601 University Drive, San Marcos 78666. Anything outside that 100 mile radius would be the responsibility of the family or estate. Payment for mileage beyond the 100 miles should be made at the time the body is removed.

### **Q: Will the body need to be embalmed?**

A: No. We prefer that the body not be embalmed.

### **Q: When would a body be unacceptable for donations?**

A: We would not accept a registered donor's body for The Willed Body Program if the body has been severely injured in an accident, if a highly contagious disease such as hepatitis, jaundice, VD, TB or AIDS, was present at the time of death. We do not accept any body donations over 500 lbs.

### **Q: Can a body be donated for specific disease research?**

A: No. The primary use of the cadavers is for forensic anthropology decomposition studies. We do not accept bodies to ascertain the cause of death or for specific disease research.

### **Q: Are there age restrictions for body donation?**

A: We do not accept infants or children.

### **Q: What do you do with the body and how long do you keep it?**

A: The bodies will be used by faculty and forensic anthropology graduate students to determine the rate of decomposition and related areas of studies.

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**Frequently Asked Questions (continued)**

**Q: What do you do with the remains when you are finished?**

A: The Forensic Anthropology Research Facility will process the remains and store them in the main Forensic Research Facility Building in San Marcos to be used for teaching purposes. However, the skeletal remains may be returned to a designated person upon request. There is a fee for return of the skeletal remains. The remains will be held for at least 90 days following notification by mail that the skeletal remains are available for return and burial.

**Q: How does one cancel a body donation?**

A: Written notification to our office is requested, but not necessary. If the Forensic Anthropology Research Facility does not receive notification of the death of a donor, we would not know to remove the body.

**Q: Should a notation be in the will of someone donating his/her body?**

A: Yes. Doing so would emphasize the donor's desire to make the donation; an attorney could clarify questions of this nature.

**Q: In the event that someone dies and hasn't filled out the proper documentation prior to death, can their body still be donated by a relative or next of kin?**

A: Yes. The nearest surviving relative or next of kin would then fill out the After Death Donation Form. The State Anatomical Board of Texas defines the next of kin in priority order as follows:

- A. Spouse
- B. If no living spouse, an adult son or daughter
- C. If no living spouse or adult son or daughter, then either living parent
- D. If no living spouse, adult son or daughter or either parent, then an adult brother or sister.

Note: If (d) applies, the Director of the Forensic Anthropology Research Facility will require a notarized affidavit indicating that the person signing the donation papers is legally the next of kin due to the absence of relatives listed in A through C.

**If you have additional questions about the program, please call:**

**Dr. Jerry Melbye**

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