

**Elizabeth Martin**  
**DO Class of 202,5**  
**Reading from 2022 Celebration of Remembrance**

Hello, my name is Elizabeth Martin and I am a first year DO student here at PCOM. My interest in medicine began as a young teenager after experiencing the impact healthcare can have on so many people's lives. Unsure of exactly what path I would follow, I knew I wanted to be a source of positive impact and hopefully save lives. In order to accomplish this, one must have skill, confidence, and passion. I knew I was passionate but didn't know if I could ever gain the skill or courage to fulfill this goal. My fellow classmates and I went through years of undergraduate education, multiple service hours, shadowing experiences, extracurricular activities, and some of us even joined the workforce for a few years before arriving at medical school.

Now, we are here; a little older, more aware, and therefore a little more scared. It is an unimaginably huge responsibility to place a human being's life in your hands. I walked into our first day at the anatomy lab with sweaty hands. I worried how I would react seeing the donors for the first time. How could I take responsibility for a patient if I am this scared right now? Then, I thought of all of you; The family and friends that cared for these people, held their hands, made memories, and loved them. I thought about how fortunate I was for the gift that they and their families were giving us through their selfless donation.

During my journey through the lab, I gained confidence I never knew I had. I loved being in that room. I realized that my hands were capable of so much more than I ever gave myself credit for. I felt the passion I was looking for. For the first time, I felt like an actual doctor, gaining skill and confidence while learning from the donors. There are so many things you can't learn from a textbook. You learn how to actually orient yourself, the true locations of important organs, and how each human being can be uniquely different.

In the past, I was trained to draw blood and knew how to look and feel for a vein. I knew it was important to not accidentally hit an artery; however, I just pictured the arm based on what I've seen in books. After my experience in the lab, I know each blood vessel of the arm, where each one will be, and what I will be feeling next time I help a patient. My confidence in my ability to successfully and safely draw blood has dramatically increased. Although this is a small example, each donor will help hundreds as future physicians gain the knowledge and confidence needed to care for patients.

Working with the donors allowed us to put aside the fear of hurting someone or making a mistake with horrible consequences. It relaxed our shaking hands that held tools for the first time. Your loved ones brought the pages of my textbook to life. It brought humanity back into practicing medicine. I could see and feel the real connections of the body and understand their actual functions. I didn't truly learn until I was able to see it in person.

Our donors will remain a part of us throughout our careers in medicine. You didn't know it, but I thanked each of you. I thought about you all every single time I stepped into that lab. If it wasn't for this, I would have never known what I was truly capable of. Because of your loved one, I now feel confident enough to fulfill the goal I had set when I was younger. A goal I never thought would come true. There aren't words to express how grateful my fellow classmates and I are for this opportunity. It is a once in a lifetime experience that we are beyond grateful for. Thank you so much.