

ANATOMICAL GIFTS

It is our hope that through anatomical gift donors, we improve upon the scientific analysis used to solve crime.

At its foundation, Florida's Forensic Institute for Research, Security, and Tactics (FIRST) is about the partnership between scholars and practitioners in the work-place to create cutting edge training in forensics, security, and tactics. Based on the scholar/practitioner model, this advanced educational and operational structure focuses on the practical application of scholarly knowledge to a multitude of disciplines within criminal justice and criminal forensic studies.

One example of such partnerships, is between Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU) and FIRST. This partnership has created an opportunity for FGCU anatomical gift donations by individuals and families to be used for education, training, and research within the FIRST outdoor facility in Pasco County, Florida. These specific donations will further the educational and research goals of the partnership as they relate to the criminal forensic investigation of death. Furthermore, donations will be accessioned into the skeletal collection maintained by the FGCU Human Identity and Trauma Analysis Program under the direction of Heather Walsh-Haney, PhD, D-ABFA, pursuant to § 765.510, et seq., Fla. Stat.

The FIRST outdoor facility, known as the FIRST Forensic Field, is approximately 11 acres and located centrally along Florida's gulf coast. Based on its geographic location and proximity to the equator, students, practitioners, and research scientists will be able to work alongside one another in a sub-tropical environment with its unique soils and vegetation. FIRST's Forensic Field also includes two different types of wetlands, emergent and forested scrub-shrub. These transitional lands between terrestrial and aquatic will be useful in simulating actual environments the student, practitioner, and researcher will most likely encounter during their forensic casework in Florida.

Furthermore, our forensic building and forensic field will allow law enforcement, crime scene investigators, and other practitioners as well as researchers, to fill gaps in knowledge by developing new methods and strategies that enable critical steps forward in the criminal forensic investigation of death. Currently, we are designing course experiences involving human remains detector dogs as well as the latest diagnostic imaging to provide data that will help establish more accurate estimates of time since death. Our facility will host and facilitate workshops to train practitioners in law enforcement and medico-legal personnel on the best practices.

The donation of one's body to science is an incredible gift. Mere words cannot express how grateful FGCU and FIRST are to the donors and their families. Without them, none of the research advancing the criminal forensic investigation of death would be possible. Additionally, these donations will continue to assist in future trainings because once accessioned into the FGCU @ FIRST skeletal collection, anatomical gift donors will provide the necessary teaching specimens for instructors to continue educating students, law enforcement, medico-legal personnel, and researchers.

To find out more information about the FIRST Forensic Field, anatomical gift donations, and how you can be part of this important crime solving legacy, contact Forensic Science Administrator Austin Polonitza or Dr. Heather Walsh-Haney.

Austin Polonitza, M.S.
(813) 733-1520
apolonitza@floridafirsttraining.org



Heather Walsh-Haney, PhD, D-ABFA
(239) 590-7693
hwalsh@fgcu.edu



