

Over your dead body

Organ-donation wishes may not be honored

By Wendy Mott
Senior Editor

Once human bodies have left their roles as temples of the soul, they have few options.

Either they push up daisies, or they're turned into ashes and scattered over a lake, adding only slightly to the world's pollution problems.

But some humans, while alive, choose another option: They donate their bodies to science.

Mike Copple, director of the Nebraska Anatomical Facility, said about 150 Nebraskans sign forms each year to donate their bodies after death.

The fate of a donated body can become quite complicated, however.

Karen Risk, administrative coordinator of the Nebraska Organ Retrieval Services, said that even if a person has signed an organ release form, the organs may not be distributed without permission from family members, as well as a complete medical-background check.

That means Mom, Dad or the

family physician can reject the person's wishes, while he or she is in no position to argue.

Many restrictions also apply to the donation of body parts, Risk said. The person must die in a hospital under certain circumstances. And the person be under age 70 to donate almost all body parts.

In other words, people who die the wrong way in the wrong place are out of luck, and not just because they're dead.

These restrictions do not, however, apply to donations of bodies for anatomy classes and research purposes.

David Woodman, visiting associate professor of biological sciences at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, said anatomical study is one of the most important uses for bodies donated to science.

UNL's biological sciences department has only one cadaver, or human body used for dissection, but Woodman said it would last for two semesters.

Woodman said UNL was lucky to have the bodies.

"It is rather rare for schools to have access to cadavers," he said. "Usually they have to rely on models and textbooks."

For his class, Pre-nursing Human Anatomy 114, Woodman said studying the bodies is especially important because it allows students to understand the structure and functions of the human body.

Joy Rishel, a senior exercise physiology major, took Human Anatomy 207, another class that uses cadavers. She said the sight of a dead human body didn't bother her, but other students felt queasier.

The experience, Rishel said, wasn't what she expected.

"It almost looked fake," she said. "Everyone built it up so much that when we finally saw it, it wasn't as big a deal."

Rishel said the worst part of working with the bodies was the smell of embalming chemicals.

"The formaldehyde smell was so strong that it stayed in my clothes the rest of the day," she said. "I think that's what makes most people sick."

Woodman said his students did not seem to have a problem working with the cadaver. Although the embalming chemicals can be irritating to some students, he said, they are as inoffensive as possible.

Rishel said she thought the body her class studied was old and overhanded.

Although the body was dissected before the students saw it, she said, students had to "touch and move and pull out" various organs. The handling and examination of the organs made them hard to identify and work with, she said.

Once the classes have finished studying the bodies, they have one stop left on their earthly journey.

Copple said schools returned the bodies to the anatomical facility, where they are cremated. Unless the family requests that the ashes be returned, he said, the remains are interred in an Omaha cemetery — their final earthly destination.



David Badders/DN



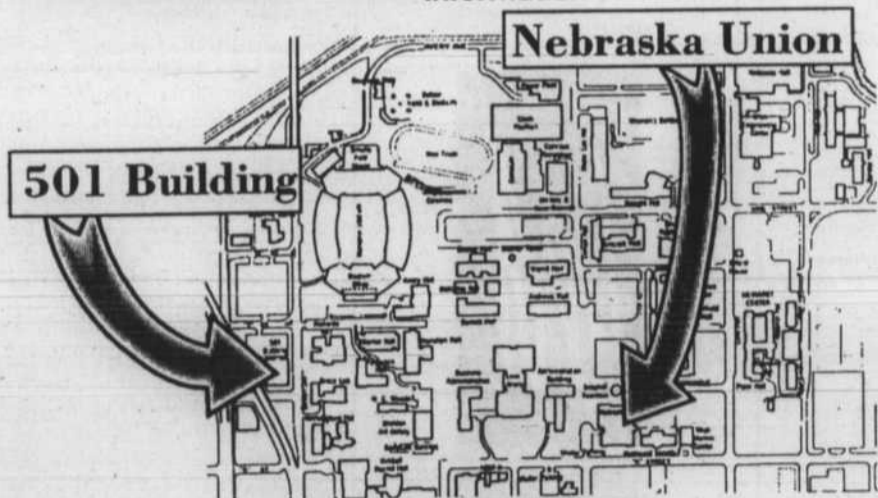
The CRC Computer Shop has moved!

Before you head over to the Union to buy your computer, read this ad!

The Computer Shop has moved to a bigger and better location in the 501 Building on 10th Street. At the new location, you can still buy Apple, IBM, NeXT, WYSE, and Zenith computers at significant student/faculty/staff discounts.



Stop in and see more computers and demonstrations than ever or give us a call at 472-5785 for more information



The CRC Computer Shop
501 Building, 501 N. 10th St.
472-5785
Monday-Friday 8 a.m.-5 p.m.

Bowlers!

Join the fun. Join a league.

Spring teams being formed now
in the Nebraska East Union North 40.

League

Husker	Monday, January 20, 6:00 p.m.
Pin Pounders	Monday, January 20, 8:00 p.m.
Big 8 Doubles	Tuesday, January 21, 7:00 p.m.
Nite Owls	Wednesday, January 22, 7:30 p.m.
Collegiate	Thursday, January 23, 6:00 p.m.
University	Thursday, January 23, 8:00 p.m.
F.A.C.	Friday, January 24, 6:00 p.m.

Each league consists of 6 teams, 4 persons per team (except for Tuesday Doubles league which is 12 teams, 2 persons per team.)

Teams and individuals must preregister and pick up a copy of the league rules at the North 40 control desk.

Students, faculty, staff, and friends are eligible.

For more information, contact:
Ray at 472-1776, or
North 40 at 472-1751