

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA  
MEDICAL SCHOOL  
DIVISION OF ANATOMY  
BERKELEY

April 12, 1940

Mr. Arthur Beal  
20 Jones Street  
San Francisco, California

My dear Mr. Beal:

Your letter of March 24th has been referred to the Division of Anatomy for reply.

Whereas we very much commend your desire to aid science, it should be understood that the right of disposal of one's body after death does not belong to that individual, nor can he will it or sell it to any institution. The body becomes the property of the next of kin, and failing these to the next of kin after, and so on. Common law practice decrees that the nearest of kin have the authority to dispose of the remains of relatives after death. It is very difficult, indeed, to obtain a waiver of such rights.

I think you should understand, also that it is illegal for any person to sell his body, since after death it does not belong to him. We never accept any material of this order whatsoever, under any conditions. Nor do we know of any institution which will accept human material on purchase.

Very truly yours,

*J. B. deC. M. Saunders*  
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J. B. deC. M. Saunders,  
Professor of Anatomy and  
Chairman of the Division

JBdeCMS:KK

Dictated by Dr. Saunders and signed by his request.