Imagine someone you had never seen nor spoken to passed away, and left you a supply of money, leaving you wealthy for the rest of your life. How would you feel? Your first reaction might be shock and maybe some excitement. But as you begin to think about it more and more, you might start feeling uneasy; and begin to ask yourself some humbling questions: “who was this person?” / “why did they do this?”

People often leave such valuable gifts when they pass away. But LIFE is a gift in itself, even more precious than money. Each life is very unique and each individual cannot be replaced. This value for life is the reason why each of us in our respective health professions is here; We want to help ensure the quality of the care we provide to the priceless lives around us. And the donors whom we celebrate today, have given us a gift far more valuable than a life-long supply of money. Their generosity prompts us to ask those humbling questions: “Who was this person?” / “why did they do this?”

As students, we may never know the motives for their donation. And we will never know the precious details comprising their lives. But the one thing we do know is that the donors we each had the privilege to learn from had lives. They had families, they had friends, they had fears, they had happiness, they had sadness. They had all of these intricacies that make each of us unique individuals.

Our donors are precious to us, for they allowed us to profoundly understand the human body so that we might be scientifically knowledgeable clinicians; and we will be GOOD because of this. But more importantly, our donors allowed us the opportunity to ponder the details of their lives, reminding us that our future patients are people and not physical symptoms. If we can always remember to keep this in mind, then they have given us the potential to be GREAT clinicians. And their donation will echo throughout our careers into our future patient’s lives.

On behalf of the University of Colorado School of Dental Medicine Class of 2013, we appreciate and are honored that family and friends are here today so that we may sincerely extend our gratitude for your loved one’s generosity.