



## THE GIFT NO PHYSICIAN EVER FORGETS

**On the first day of anatomy lab in the School of Medicine, the entire first-year class gathers in groups of six, each with a cadaver they will carefully study for the next seven weeks. Here, they will learn the fundamentals of biology shared by all people, as well as the inherent quirks of individual anatomy. They will witness the scars, injuries, and evidence of how this person spent her days on earth. For budding physicians, the experience inspires awe and humbles. Medical anatomy becomes personal and profoundly human.**

**Every day in the anatomy lab is a reminder that men and women—perhaps when ailing, perhaps in the prime of life—decided to donate their remains to further medical education. To honor these people and to express gratitude, first-year med students gather in Pitt's Heinz Memorial Chapel annually.**

**On a brilliant spring day, families of donors fill the front chapel pews; white-coated students take the pews in the back. During one of many musical tributes, the congregation sits in stunned silence as eight students mesmerize with an a cappella performance of Palestrina's *Sicut cervus*, one of the greatest examples of religious choral art to emerge from the Renaissance. Seventy-one donor names are read aloud; a candle is lit for each. Class of 2015 president Lauren Zammerilla makes a pledge: With every patient they see, she and her classmates will repay these profound offerings with humility, respect, and compassion. As Loren Roth, associate senior vice chancellor for clinical policy and planning, health sciences, and a physician himself, notes, "These honored dead have made a gift that no young man or woman who becomes a physician ever forgets." *—Chuck Staresinic***

PHOTOS BY JOSH FRANZOS