

## **TSI Videos Transcriptions**

### **Arlene LoCicero – The Family of the Non-Living Donor**

“Doctors approach families of patients who are in fact brain dead cautiously and carefully. In fact, they need to be able to explain what brain death is, and in a succinct way brain death is the brain’s inability to function. It’s the brain’s inability to sustain the organs of the body to in fact continue life as we know it. Patients who are in that situation are usually on ventilators and that is what is keeping the body alive. Our family experienced the need to understand brain death. And we had questions regarding how we could understand that better. In fact, doctors graciously permitted us to see the kinds of test the law requires in order to determine brain death. And in sitting in on those tests, we had an objective way to evaluate our child’s condition. As a result of those tests, we could understand brain death-- that our child would not live on her own. And so for us, donation was not the most difficult decision at all. The most difficult decision was to accept that our daughter death, brain death in fact, occurred.”

### **Jack LoCicero – The Family of the Non-Living Donor**

“The year before Amy and Gary were married, and when they returned from their honeymoon Gary was diagnosed with pancreatic liver cancer. One of the things my wife read about, an article about a hospital doing work with liver and pancreatic cancer using transplantation. We investigated and found out that this was not possible for Gary; he was too far gone. So we had a little bit more about organ donation than we had in the past. The decision to donate was made that Friday night, after...well we knew that she was not going to recover. And the idea that we could provide what is glibly called the “gift of life” to someone else, and knowing that we would have accepted an organ if it were possible for Gary the year before, that decision was easy. Accepting the fact that she was not going to recover, that was difficult.”

### **Arlene LoCicero – The Family of the Non-Living Donor**

“Since 1993 federal law requires that patients who are on ventilators and who in fact have been declared brain dead...families of those patients need to be asked whether or not organ and tissue donation is something that they would want to do. Basically, at that time the family looks for support. The family in fact would tend to turn to a clergyman...would tend to rely on the relationship that the family has had with nurses and doctors under the circumstances that they found themselves in. And as a result of that kind of support, and sometimes another donor family, now ten years later, can be such a real assistance to the decision making process. But when that happens all of those influences unite and help the family to make that critical critical decision to help others.”

**Arlene LoCicero – The Family of the Non-Living Donor**

“We know that grief or mourning is part of our lives from that point on. That hasn’t changed from year to year. However, we have had the joy of knowing Amy’s recipients. The situation for us was, you know, an event that made the news considerably. So we got to know Theresa Carovella, who received Amy’s heart. At the time she was the mother of seven. Now she’s the grandmother of fourteen and the great grandmother of two. We have met Betty Jenko from Dallas, Texas, who is Amy’s kidney recipient and is doing well. You can’t help but combine both the mourning and the joy that comes with knowing these people have had ten years of extended life. I guess you can say that we walk in sorrowful joy.”

**Jack LoCicero – The Family of the Non-Living Donor**

“That Friday night when we were apprised of the fact that Amy really wasn’t going to recover—and then according to New York law they had to do the tests over again to determine and make it an official brain death—we were told that next day the assistant medical examiner had stopped the donation process in order to have an autopsy, because Amy was involved in a homicide situation. Fortunately the doctors who were involved, and the chief medical examiner, saw the merit in what we wanted to do and allowed Amy’s organs to be donated, and then they fulfilled the legal requirements for an autopsy after that point. I think it’s important that the medical examiners be made aware of the need to work together with the appropriate personnel in determining when it is appropriate for organ donation.”