

The Anatomage Table in the Francis A. Countway Library of Medicine was designed and built by Anatomage, Inc., a for-profit company based in San Jose, California in the United States of America.

According to Anatomage, Inc., the images of the four human subjects available for anatomical dissection on the Anatomage Table were licensed from the National Library of Medicine's Visible Human Project (United States of America) and the Visible Korean Human (Republic of Korea).

The Visible Human Project (VHP) is a public-domain library of cross-sectional anatomical, MRI, and CT images sourced from male and female Caucasian bodies. The male subject is Joseph Paul Jernigan, a 39-year-old man convicted of murder and executed by lethal injection in Texas in 1993. Reportedly, after consultation with a prison chaplain, Jernigan consented to will his body to the Texas State Anatomical Board for scientific education, from which it was then transferred to the VHP.

The VHP's 59-year-old female subject died of a heart attack in 1993 and willed her body to the Maryland State Anatomical Board. Unlike the VHP's male subject, she has remained anonymous, although she is often described in the scientific and popular literature as a housewife from Maryland. Reportedly, her husband requested that her remains be part of the VHP. The data sets for the male and female subjects were made public in 1994 and 1995, respectively. The University of Colorado Health Science Center conducted the preparatory and imaging work for the project.

The Visible Korean Human (VKH), inspired by the VHP and designed to be an improvement on that initial effort, was started in 2000 at Ajou University, Suwon, Republic of Korea. Images of the male subject were released in 2002, and those of the female subject were released in 2010. The male subject was 33 years old when he died of leukemia in 2001. The 26-year female subject died of stomach cancer with lymph node metastases. Both the male and female subjects donated their remains to scientific research.

The origins of the remains in the prosection and histological images used on the Anatomage Table are, at present, unknown. The Library has reached out to Anatomage, Inc. for additional information.

Medical knowledge has a history, and it is critical that medical professionals reflect upon the origins of that knowledge when using it to further medical science and clinical practice. More information on both the VHP and VKH can be found in the following sources.

Sources:

Visible Human Project (VHP)

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