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## Deep-Sixing Your Ashes

by [Joyce Slaton](#)

3:00 a.m. Jun. 19, 1999 PDT

If the thought of spending eternity in a satin-lined box in the ground gives you the willies, you may like Eternal Reefs' aqueous option.



### CULTURE

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[Eternal Reefs](#) incorporates cremated remains into artificial reefs for those who like the idea of becoming one with the ocean. Company president Don Brawley said that Eternal Reefs' plan is a way of "living on."

"Think about it," he said. "Would you rather spend eternity in a field of dead people or down in the sea with all that life?"

Eternal Reefs is an offshoot of the Reef Ball Development Group, which has been creating and placing artificial reefs since the 1970s. The reefs are made of specially treated concrete designed to mimic a natural reef and to last a minimum of 500 years. Reef Balls has placed tens of thousands of artificial reefs on the East Coast and in the Caribbean in an effort to bolster deteriorating reef systems, but is only now offering customers the chance to incorporate their remains into a "permanent, living memorial."

"This is a way for the public to be involved with the preservation of the ecosystem," said Brawley. "I kind of look at it as new life for a new millennium."

Eternal Reefs hit upon the idea of creating reef memorials when Brawley's father-in-law was diagnosed with terminal cancer in 1998.

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He requested that his cremated remains be implanted in an artificial reef. As he put it: "I can think of nothing better than having all that action going on around me all the time after I am gone -- just make sure that the location has lots of red snapper and grouper."


Brawley honored this request by mixing his father-in-law's cremated remains with the concrete used to form a reef.

"We basically put [his ashes] into the concrete mixer and cast a reef with his remains mixed in," Brawley said. "It was really touching for me putting the remains in the concrete and knowing he was in there."

That reef was then sunk off the coast of Sarasota, Florida, and, as a friend of Brawley's reports, it is indeed surrounded by grouper and snapper.

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