



## This final resting place comes alive

Corey Beckman reports

By: [Corey Beckman, FOX 13 News](#)

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**SARASOTA (FOX 13)** - Sarasota resident Thomas Creel loved boating the gulf waters off of Sarasota. So did Kevin Richardson, who was born and raised in Lakeland.

Creel was diagnosed with melanoma a little over three years ago. Richardson was diagnosed with lung cancer just this past Thanksgiving. Both passed away early in 2016.

Before they died, though, each man told their families exactly what they wanted done with their remains. Now their ashes sit feet apart in the Gulf of Mexico, part of an artificial reef put in place by a Sarasota based company named Eternal Reefs.



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"We are a memorialization company that specializes in creating memorials as part of artificial reef systems," explained Eternal Reefs CEO George Frankel.

Families first create a reef ball, in which they mix concrete with the cremated remains. They then get to personalize the reef by adding items that memorialize their loved ones.

"They'll put handprints in the concrete, they can etch little messages, or add mementos like military medals," continued Frankel.

Two days later, Eternal Reefs holds a family viewing day. Families get to see the finished reef and further personalize it with things like sidewalk chalk. For those that qualify, military honors are also given during a ceremony.

The next morning, families take a boat ride out to the reef site for the placement and dedication. "They'll get to witness each of the reefs being placed on the bottom, one at a time. We announce each memorial as it's being placed."

All families get a moment to say their goodbyes however they choose. Eternal Reefs then does a dedication recognizing all the people that were placed in the reef that day.

As for the reefs, Frankel says fish start to immediately gather around them. "We'll start to get visible growth in four to six weeks and really measurable growth in two to three months."

Eternal Reefs currently is working on 21 reef sites in seven different states. Prices to memorialize a loved one range from \$3,000 to \$8,000. The largest reef can hold up to four family members.

For more information, visit [www.eternalreefs.com](http://www.eternalreefs.com)





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