

CREMATION STONES

By Ryan Helfenbein

On July 4, 2022 the Mackinac Island Stone Skipping Tournament was held at Windermere Pointe Beach, Michigan. Spectators both in person and watching on ESPN were able to enjoy impressive stone skips during the Wilmer T. Rabe International Stone Skipping Tournament. In a moment of realization that there is in fact a tournament and even a World Championship (located in Scotland) for stone skipping, one has to wonder, “what is the perfect skipping stone?” According to Google, it is to be a mostly flat stone, about the size of your palm, with the weight of a tennis ball. It is commonly accepted that triangular stones skip the best. These appear to be good guidelines, but what about a recently departed’s stone? Would that work? Oh, and no ... I’m not saying a stone that was a favorite of someone who has passed away, I’m referencing the stone that IS the recently departed.

Eliminate the idea of a coffee can, humidior, or cookie jar as an eternal resting place for those cremated remains (ashes). A new company has recently developed a way to solidify cremated remains into stones, meaning the family does not have to receive ashes after cremation is performed. Undertakers today can see that cremated remains become what are called Parting Stones. Now these are no ordinary stones, but a

human-made “stone” resembling a mostly flat river rock, around the size of your palm and weight of a tennis ball. Yes, much like a perfect skipping stone.

Creating Parting Stones© involves a five-step process. A collection process is the starting point. Your Undertaker will place the remains in a specialized “Collection Kit” after cremation is completed. They are then transported to a lab in Santa Fe, New Mexico, all the while being tracked by your local undertaker. A purification process is then performed to remove any foreign contaminants like medical implants (however if cremation is done properly, these contaminants have already been removed during cremation). After the cremated remains are cleansed of any impurities, the forming process begins. This is where the cremated remains are mixed with a small amount of a binder additive and turned into a ‘clay-like’ form, which is poured into molds. A solidification process occurs when the molds are heated in a kiln and the remains attain a hard composition. The stones are cleaned, polished, and beautifully packaged. Then the process of returning the stones to the Undertaker, and then the family, begins.

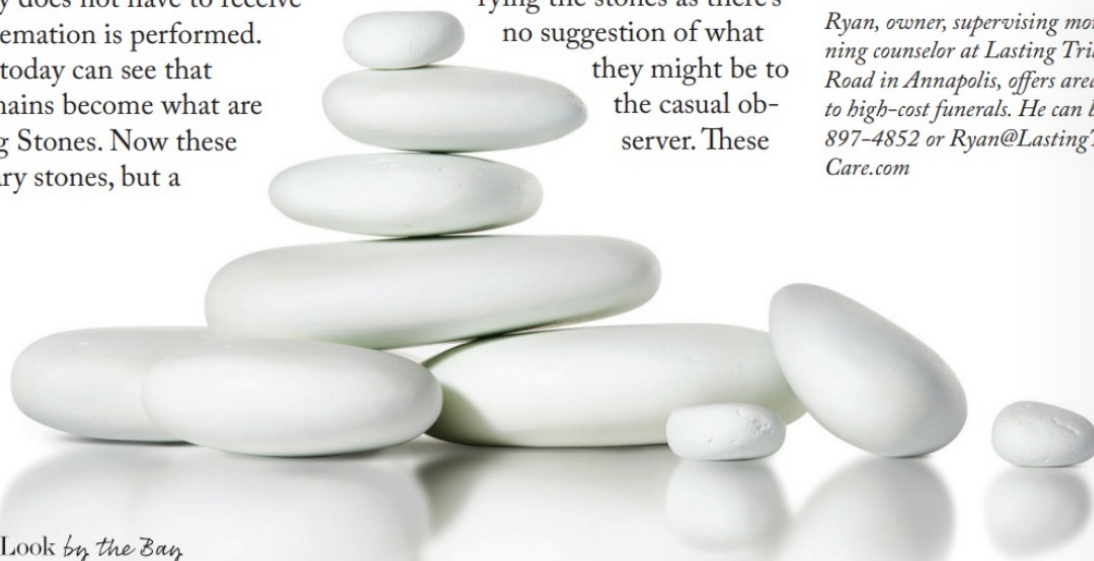
Some families that have chosen this option are finding comfort in carrying the stones as there’s

no suggestion of what they might be to the casual observer. These

Parting Stones© enable those who are grieving to keep their loved ones close to them in a hand-held and pocket-size form, rather than an urn on the closet shelf or back seat of a car (both true stories). Outside of a traditional cemetery or columbarium wall, survivors can now explore meaningful areas as the final resting place for the one they lost. If a lifelong memory of that person is standing by the shoreline while their kids played in the water, why not leave a stone right there? Was Paris a favorite destination for them? If so, perhaps leaving a stone at the base of the Eiffel Tower is something to consider. Parting Stones provide the opportunity for a one-of-a-kind final resting place that would be meaningful to the one who has passed, and memorable for those left behind.

Perhaps during the 2023 Stone Skipping Tournament, World Record Holder, Kurt Steiner, will beat his 88 rock-skips using a new kind of stone. Maybe the Parting Stone© of a family member, close friend, or stone-skipping competitor could be the lucky winning option for Kurt. Professionals and amateurs alike can now embrace a new way to lay their loved ones to rest thanks to Parting Stone’s innovated approach to celebrating a life well lived.

Ryan, owner, supervising mortician and preplanning counselor at Lasting Tributes on Bestgate Road in Annapolis, offers area residents solutions to high-cost funerals. He can be contacted at (410) 897-4852 or Ryan@LastingTributesFuneral-Care.com



(Parting Stone photo)