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From dust to diamonds

Now diamonds really can be your best friend. They can also be your grandfather, your great-aunt, or your puppy. For a minimum of \$8,000, a Chicago company will turn the dust of your loved ones into a sparkling blue gem. "You can have your loved one with you whenever you choose, which is something no other memorial product offers," Greg Herro, LifeGem's chief executive, tells *The Boston Globe*. "Nothing else quite offers that everlasting love." Rusty Vandenberg, one of the company's partners,

who has "issues with his own mortality," came up with the idea. Humans are made of carbon, he reasoned, and so are diamonds. Why not make diamonds out of people? The process involves heating cremated remains to about 5,400 degrees, which burns off impurities and changes carbon to graphite. Then the graphite is pressed and heated over the course of seven to 10 days into a gem. Trace amounts of the element boron found in the body give the diamond its blue tint. The same process works on pets. "At LifeGem," says Herro, "we consider pets as family members."



The family jewel