



Contact:

Becky Peterson for Eternal Reefs  
770-367-0321  
[bpetepr@bellsouth.net](mailto:bpetepr@bellsouth.net)

Erica England for The Jekyll Island Authority  
912.635.4046  
[eengland@jekyllisland.com](mailto:eengland@jekyllisland.com)

## **GRIFFIN, THE SEA TURTLE, GETS FINAL REST IN AN ETERNAL REEF**

*Beloved Loggerhead Sea Turtle at the Georgia Sea Turtle Center Will Be Memorialized in Reef Casting, Celebration and Sea Turtle Release Marking World Sea Turtle Day*

Jekyll Island, GA – June 8, 2011 – To mark World Sea Turtle Day (June 16<sup>th</sup>) the Jekyll Island Authority's Georgia Sea Turtle Center (GSTC) and Eternal Reefs will memorialize Griffin and cast his ashes into a reef ball on Friday, June 17. The day will also feature several sea turtles being released into the ocean after successful rehabilitation at GSTC ([www.GeorgiaSeaTurtleCenter.org](http://www.GeorgiaSeaTurtleCenter.org)). The releases will be at the Great Dunes Park (Shell Road and North Beachview Drive, Jekyll Island) at 12 noon, followed by the reef ball casting at the Georgia Sea Turtle Center (214 Stable Road, Jekyll Island) at 1 pm.

Griffin, an adult male loggerhead sea turtle who suffered from a condition similar to a human stroke, had been a patient at the Georgia Sea Turtle Center since November 2007 and touched the hearts of countless visitors, staff and volunteers. Echoing the purpose of World Sea Turtle Day, Griffin's memory will live on through GSTC educational programs, mission and outreach. His ashes will be incorporated into a large, eco-friendly reef ball which will be placed in a permitted location in the ocean off Miami in July.

Reef balls are an alternative to ash spreading in which cremated remains are incorporated into huge, hollow, structures that look like wiffle balls and foster new marine growth, replenishing the world's diminishing natural reef systems.

“Griffin was valuable to help educate the public of issues affecting sea turtles and the difficulty in rehabilitation in some cases, and he was also helpful with researching various rehabilitation techniques even if not successful,” stated Director of the Georgia Sea Turtle Center, Dr. Terry Norton. “Because Griffin had been with the Georgia Sea Turtle Center for so long and has taught us so much, we felt memorializing him in an Eternal Reef was the very best way to honor his passing.”

Throughout his three plus years at Jekyll Island's GSTC, Griffin went through extensive diagnostic testing which ultimately determined that he was suffering from a condition similar to a human stroke. Long term treatment and physical therapy for his condition were initially encouraging but he plateaued and ultimately failed to make progress. Despite valiant attempts to rehabilitate, Griffin could only float and was unable to dive.

“World Sea Turtle Day was originally established to foster the goals of our organization’s founder, Dr. Archie Carr,” said David Godfrey, Executive Director of the Sea Turtle Conservancy. “Sending Griffin’s remains to rest in this manner seems a fitting way to honor his memory and promote goodwill toward sea turtles and their ocean habitats.”

An Eternal Reefs "memorial reef" is specially engineered to entice fish and other forms of sea life into the reef, building new habitats in and around the uneven structure. Eternal Reefs takes cremated remains and incorporates them into an environmentally safe cast cement mixture which weighs between 600 pounds (2’ high x 4’ wide) and 4500 pounds (4’ high x 6’ wide). Griffin’s Reef will become part of the Golden Beach Reef Site near the Miami coastline next month, on July 11.

“When the Georgia Sea Turtle Center called us, we were thrilled to partner in Griffin’s memorial activities,” George Frankel, Eternal Reefs CEO, said. “I’m certain casting Griffin will be a moving, therapeutic and healing process giving him a celebratory, living legacy.”

On June 17, the public is invited to share in the ceremony and activities when Griffin’s pearl and the reef ball shell are completed. Staff and volunteers will then have the opportunity to personalize his Reef Ball on site with handprints, written messages and other memorabilia in the damp concrete. Along with World Sea Turtle Day, Griffin’s Reef Ball ceremony also coincides with the GSTC’s 4<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

Griffin will be the second sea turtle memorialized by Eternal Reefs. In 2005, Dare, a female Kemp’s Ridley sea turtle stranded in Hurricane Floyd, was memorialized off the coast of Topsail Island, NC in partnership with the Karen Beasley Sea Turtle Rescue and Rehabilitation Center.

#### **About Eternal Reefs Inc.**

Eternal Reefs, Inc is an Atlanta-based company that provides a creative, environmentally-enhancing way to memorialize the cremated remains of a loved one. The company incorporates cremated remains into a concrete mixture used to cast artificial reef formations. The artificial reefs are dedicated as permanent memorials while also bolstering natural coastal reef formations. Since 1998, the company has placed more than 1,500 Memorial Reefs in 20 locations off the coasts of Florida, South Carolina, North Carolina, Maryland, New Jersey, Texas and Virginia, substantially increasing the ocean’s diminishing reef systems. Memorial reefs can only go in properly permitted locations by the US Government. Contact Eternal Reefs Inc. at: [www.eternalreefs.com](http://www.eternalreefs.com)

###

**Images (including a photo of Griffin) available for download at:**  
<http://www.eternalreefs.com/about/press.html>

**Interviews available upon request**