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RAMAURA™ CULTURED RUBIES DONATED TO SMITHSONIAN'S NATIONAL GEM COLLECTION

A dazzling selection of cultured ruby crystals have been donated to the National Gem and Mineral Collection of the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History. Eight Ramaura Cultured Rubies are on display indefinitely in the National Gem Gallery of the Janet Annenberg Hooker Hall of Geology, Gems and Minerals in the Museum. The generous gift was made by Judith Osmer, CEO of the J.O. Crystal Co. Inc., and creator of the Ramaura Cultured Ruby.

Jeffrey E. Post, curator of the museum's National Gem and Mineral Collection, sought the donation after first seeing Ramaura crystals in 2000. "We are very pleased to add these exquisite synthetic ruby crystals to the National Collection. They beautifully illustrate how laboratory processes can mimic natural crystal formation."

Just as in nature, the Ramaura cultured ruby develops through a remarkable self-nucleating process, in which no seeds are used to trigger or force growth. Nearly 30 years ago, it began as a painstaking process of trial and error to ensure that the conditions were optimal to create ruby crystals. A Ramaura crystal may grow into a variety of magnificent shapes and patterns rarely seen in natural rubies. They match the color and quality of Burmese rubies.

"Nothing has given me more satisfaction than to have my Ramaura Ruby displayed in the gem collection with the Hope Diamond," said Osmer.

Since 1983 when Judith Osmer started the J.O. Crystal Co., gemologists voiced concern over the difficulty of recognizing a cultured ruby from a natural ruby. The result is that every Ramaura ruby has a tiny identifier built into its chemistry to aid gemologists in its identification.

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The National Gem Collection of the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History is the world's preeminent collection of gems and jewelry, boasting more than ten thousand pieces. Superb specimens of virtually every variety of gemstone are included in the collection, most of which came to the Museum through the generosity of private individuals.

Opened in 1910, the National Museum of Natural History is dedicated to maintaining and preserving the world's most extensive collection of natural history specimens and human artifacts. It also fosters critical scientific research as well as educational programs and exhibitions that present the work of its scientists and curators to the public. The Smithsonian is the world's largest museum and research complex. The National Museum of Natural History is open from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. every day except Dec. 25. Admission is free.

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