

My name is Michael Hill and I was a good friend to Stephen Kotlowski GG, CSM since the mid 90's. At that time, I contacted UltraTec about purchasing a machine. They directed me to Stephen as he was the dealer in my area (Newburgh, NY). He lived just three miles away so it was very convenient to talk with him and to learn about faceting.

Stephen was a truly great person and very easy to become friends with. Stephen worked with another gentleman, Gary, who together with Stephen, dealt in collectors' custom-cut stones. Gary would purchase rough and Stephen would cut it. I eventually became part of their group and I also bought rough and had Stephen cut it.

Our first purchase occurred when some friends of Gary asked him if he was interested in purchasing a parcel of rough Nigerian tourmaline. At this time, the Nigerian tourmaline was first entering the market and wasn't very popular. We got a good deal on the parcel and I ended up purchasing it. Stephen cut almost all of it for me. I have one piece left. It is:

- 20.05ct Vfn Rubellite tourmaline from Nigeria cut in a UK mixed brilliant pear shape

Through Stephen, I was able to also buy some rough. He was to cut some stones for a gentleman in Utah but the gentleman decided to sell the rough instead. Stephen informed me of this and I bought the rough and had Stephen cut it. I have two pieces of this lot left. They are:

- 11.06ct Cinnamon scapolite cut in a brilliant EMC
- 17.25ct Fn Deep blueish green tourmaline from Brazil cut in a UK Barrel flash rectangle.

We also bought a few pieces of rough from New Era Gems. We purchased a piece of tanzanite, a color change garnet from Waywanda, Mt. Africa, and a small parcel of dravite tourmaline from Kenya. The tanzanite had a small inclusion so it faceted out as a smaller stone

planned with a small inclusion in the upper right corner when looking at it. The three from New Era Gems are:

- 8.45ct Fv Dravite Tourmaline, Kenya, Dbl main Brilliant Oval
- 2.60ct CC Garnet, Waywanda, Mt. Africa, UK cushion, changes color from a Bronze to Pink
- 6.25ct very slightly included Tanzanite, UK square in 14ct gold pendent setting

There were times when Stephen needed some extra money in between jobs and he would sell me a stone or specimen to get him by. From Stephen, I bought:

- 21.40ct Vfn Raspberry rhodolite garnet from Kenya, cut in a UK brilliant oval
- 11.05ct Tanzanite cut in a UK freeform rectangle to show the gorgeous sapphire blue color
- 6.80ct Burmese peridot w/schiller (mineral unknown) cut in a UK dbl Barion Cushion.

Stephen worked for a jeweler early in his career and the peridot was a 22ct stone that had a chip in it. The jeweler GAVE Stephen the stone and he recut it into the 6.8ct stone.

In the late 90's, Stephen was doing some work for a gentleman from overseas. Stephen cut a color change, 26ct diaspore (Sultans Shield) which won first place in its category in the AGTA competition in 1995. The mineral was introduced and marketed as CC Zultanite. It was Stephen's ability to facet nearly any material that helped to propel this mineral into a world class collectors' stone. Part of Stephens relationship with the supplier was that Stephen would be paid in cash and also in the cc diaspore rough. I was able to purchase four pieces of this rough and I had Stephen cut two of them. They are:

- 11.60ct Vfn CC Zultanite diaspore, Turkey, cut in UK Zultanite flash rectangle
- 10.05ct CC Vfn Zultanite diaspore, Turkey, UK Long rectangle.

I attended a gem and mineral show and Stephen suggested looking up a friend of his. From him, I bought a piece of rough beryl that was treated. This one is:

- “Kashmir” Blue maxi beryl (*enhanced color) cut in a UK “X” marks the spot EMC. *color not stable in sunlight, collectors’ stone only.

Stephen moved and established himself in Arizona as a brilliant cutter and because of this, he was able to sell his stones but also he was able to facet for a wide variety of customers including the owner of the Angus Dei Topaz. Unfortunately, Stephen passed away a few years ago and the world truly lost a great faceter and an even better person.

Sincerely,

Michael Hill