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Last Updated: 9:22 am | Tuesday, December 15, 2009

Ex-Bengal Pat McNally auctions rare books

BY LAUREN BISHOP • LBISHOP@ENQUIRER.COM • DECEMBER 15, 2009

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You may know Pat McNally as a punter and wide receiver for the Bengals from 1976 to 1985, the only Harvard graduate to play in both a Super Bowl and a Pro Bowl and the creator of Kenner's top-selling Starting Lineup action figures.

What you probably didn't know is that he also has one of the foremost collections of children's literature, and that he's putting about \$1 million of it on the auction block Wednesday.

The collection includes a signed, limited American edition of "The House at Pooh Corner" that McNally says he bought in the late '70s at the Ohio Bookstore, Downtown, for about \$240. That volume and two other A.A. Milne books are now expected to fetch \$20,000-\$50,000 each.

Other books in the collection are expected to bring even more. Beatrix Potter's own specially bound and signed copy of "The Tale of Peter Rabbit" is expected to sell for \$80,000-\$120,000.



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And his copy of "Through the Looking Glass, and What Alice Found There," which once belonged to 10-year-old Alice Liddell, author Lewis Carroll's inspiration for the character of Alice, is valued at \$100,000-\$150,000. That book is "something that comes along only once in a lifetime," says Joe Maddalena, president of Calabasas, Calif.-based auction company Profiles in History.

McNally, who is now 56 and lives in Newport Beach, Calif., says he has long collected everything from bottle caps to books largely because of the influence of his mother, who was an antiques dealer. He started his collection of children's and young adult books when he first signed with the Bengals.

"I set out 15 years ago to get best copies of the most important children's books, and I'm pretty happy with what I've collected," he says.

Wednesday's auction of 101 lots also includes first editions of "The Wonderful Wizard of Oz" by L. Frank Baum (\$40,000-\$60,000); "Goldfinger," signed by author Ian Fleming (\$60,000-\$80,000); "The Time Machine: An Invention," signed by author H.G. Wells (\$20,000-\$30,000); "Stuart Little," signed by E.B. White (\$10,000-\$15,000); and J.R.R. Tolkien's "The Fellowship of the Ring" (\$10,000-\$20,000). Newer works include set of deluxe edition copies of the first four

Harry Potter books, all inscribed by author J.K. Rowling (\$6,000-\$8,000).

Perpetually in pursuit of the best copies of the most important works, McNally says he'll use the proceeds from the auction to build up other parts of his collection and eventually put those on the auction block, too. "There's a certain victory in showing that you bought something neat," he says.

Married to Leslie, a native of Cincinnati's West Side, and a father of two, McNally now coaches high school football and sits on the board of the National Football League's Youth Football Fund and Wonderlic, Inc. McNally was the only NFL player to receive a perfect score on Wonderlic's intelligence test, which all prospective NFL players take.

The auction begins at 3 p.m. Wednesday. Collectors can bid in person, by mail, by phone, by fax or online. Visit www.profilesinhistory.com for more information.



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