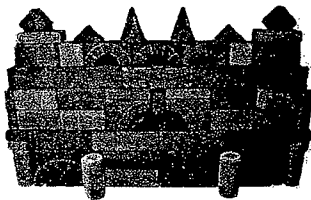


OBJECTS OF **DESIRE**

Dolls and Toys in the Executive Suite and Celebrity Homes

By Virginia Watson



The passion, the drive of collectors has fueled the careers of many high-profiled individuals. The only thing that may be able to rival their careers is their own toy and doll collections, many of which can be considered an empire in itself.



Judith K. Hofer, the former CEO of May Merchandising Company and May Department Stores International, has an extensive doll collection. Collecting dolls has been Hofer's passion since her childhood. Her collection consists of over 2,000 dolls and it has been displayed in various publications, including *Fortune Magazine*, *Arts and Antiques* and *Savvy Magazine*. As previously stated in an interview for *Fortune Magazine*, her fantasy? "To turn a Victorian house into a life sized doll museum."

Tom Oakley started collecting toy trucks during his childhood as well. The CEO of Atlas Transfer & Storage Co. received his first toy truck when he was a young boy. The truck was modeled after one used in the company, which has been in his family since 1940. The entire collection consists of over 1,000 trucks, most of which are displayed throughout Oakley's San Diego area office. The majority of the trucks are small models of actual moving and storage company trucks; however some also represent freight companies. The most meaningful pieces are the ones that bear logos of companies that have since gone out of business. The trucks in Oakley's collection were amassed from toy stores, antique stores, private collectors, manufacturers, online auction sites and as gifts.



Mark Ecco, designer and CEO of his own company, Ecco Enterprises, has a collection of figurines known as Crazychildren, designed by Hong Kong artist Michael Lau. These figurines represent urban and hip-hop culture, which is the foundation of Ecco's various clothing lines. The dozens of figurines are on display in his New Jersey office and, according to a *New York Times* article, Ecco's collection reflects his "defiant attitude" and innovative outlook that carry over into his company, first begun as a sportswear label.

Caroline Kennedy, daughter of former United States President John F. Kennedy, has her own collection of dolls. This collection is showcased at the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum. The exhibit is titled "Gifts from the World to the White House: Caroline Kennedy's Doll Collection (1961-1963)". The collection consists of 77 dolls from 30 countries that were



given to Caroline Kennedy between 1961 and 1963. She was given dolls from around the world by prominent world figures, including Italy's Prime Minister Amintore Fanfani, the Ivory Coast's President Felix Houphouët-Boigny, India's Indira Gandhi, Monaco's Princess Grace and France's President and Madame de Gaulle. Other dolls in her collection were given as gifts from foreign citizens who did not hold official government positions. The exhibit has traveled to various locations, including the Harry S. Truman Library and Museum (November 2006 through March 2007), the Decatur House (June 2007 through February 2008) and most recently the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library and Museum (scheduled for April 2008 through November 2008).

Celebrities are also passionate about collecting. Bob Barker, the former host of the popular game show *The Price is Right*, collects military figurines. There are about 175 pieces

in all. Barker's collection began when his late wife, Dorothy Jo, who was aware of his interest in the military and America's war history, bought him the first figure. The figurine was one of Napoleon's generals. Even though Barker has not added many new pieces to his collection since his late wife passed away, there are still three full-sized cabinets that are filled with his collection, which he loves to show others. "I keep the figurines in open cabinets so anyone who wants to pick them up and look at them can," Barker told Ken Hall of *Southeastern Antiquing and Collecting Magazine*.

Actress Cathy Shim of *Reno 911* on Comedy Central and *Mad TV* has a collection of over 100 jigsaw puzzles and proudly frames and displays the ones she has found the most challenging. Shim began collecting

jigsaw puzzles at an early age, around three years old. She began working on puzzles after her family moved from Korea to the United States.

Other celebrity toy collectors include writer and director Quentin Tarantino, who enjoys collecting board games, specifically vintage games; and actress Cynthia Pepper, who has a collection of stuffed animals. Pepper's collection began with stuffed bears, which make up the majority of her collection. Out of 75 stuffed animals, about 50 are stuffed bears, most of which were given to her by her husband.

Celebrity vintage and antique doll collectors include Demi Moore, Morgan Fairchild, Richard Simmons and Marie Osmond. Demi Moore increases her doll collection when she travels around the world maintaining her collection. Marie Osmond designs and sells her own line of porcelain dolls.

While the range of collections may vary from porcelain dolls to puzzles and stuffed animals, they all were created with the drive and passion that lies within each collector. No matter the reason for high-profile people to begin collections, one thing for sure is that they become a source of pride and accomplishment and maybe even a return to simpler times.

