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**Contact:** Thomas Morelli  
(415) 255-7221  
[press@tvcollection.com](mailto:press@tvcollection.com)

Robert Lee  
(206) 778-1882  
[robert@tvcollection.com](mailto:robert@tvcollection.com)

## **Glittering TV Collection Spanning Four Star-Studded Decades Hits eBay Auction Block, Appraisal Exceeds \$1 Million**

*Single Largest Private Collection of TV Pictures and Content  
Includes More Than 200,000 Original Item*

**SAN FRANCISCO and HOPEWELL, Va. – December 4, 2003** – A vast, long-hidden collection of classic television memorabilia glittering with Hollywood Stars ([www.tvcollection.com](http://www.tvcollection.com)), recently appraised at more than \$1 million, will hit the eBay™ ([www.ebay.com](http://www.ebay.com)) auction block on Friday, December 5 for a ten-day auction. The star-studded archive—more than 200,000 separate items covering forty years of television programming—comprised the working files of Press Features, a company owned and operated by the Vonetes family of Hopewell, Virginia.

Polly Vonetes, a widely respected Hollywood insider columnist, began accumulating the materials in the early 1960s as part of her work in producing what was one of the first weekly TV guide newspaper inserts. The wildly successful programming guide begun by Press Features eventually served more than 70 daily newspapers with a circulation of 2.5 million households when it was sold in 1982 to United Media, a Scripps-Howard Company. The exclusive TV collection that resulted from this work has been maintained by the Vonetes family since 1960, and will be sold to the highest bidder at an online eBay auction with the last bid accepted on December 15. The reserve price, or lowest acceptable bid for purchasing the collection, is set at \$400,000.

“What started as a few files used by a small business more than forty years ago has grown into an international resource,” said Dean Vonetes. “Every week our files grew as new materials continued to arrive from the networks, producers and studios. The value of this collection goes beyond the thousands of items contained in our files—it’s a treasure trove of TV history that has been preserved for future use.”

Spanning four decades, the dazzling archive now comprises what is the single largest private collection of television pictures and content. Also included are materials produced by the Vonetes companies, Press Features and Television Newsfeatures Syndicate; they conducted their own interviews with many stars and wrote original reviews of shows and features. It covers more than 26,000 performers and virtually

every television show that aired on American TV from 1960 onward (as well as some fragmentary materials from the 1950s). This is an extraordinary collection of 90,150 photographs including more than 24,000 slides, and at least 134,000 written documents encompassing biographical sketches, press releases, newspaper clippings, and original studio promotional kits. Many of the items contained in the archives are thought to be among the few remaining originals in existence.

### **Business, Research and Philanthropic Value**

Classified by programming genre such as TV series and specials, movies and documentaries, as well as by individual stars (biographical), the collection is encased in the original filing cabinets used by the publishers of the television guide inserts. In keeping with the original intent of the archive, the Vonetes family encourages the continued use of the TV collection for business and research purposes.

“Television and the mystique of Hollywood has become an undeniable thread in the unique fabric of American culture,” said Dean Vonetes, whose family’s work is represented in the TV collection. “My father always felt that there was a real need for a library or repository of television materials, not only for us and our work, but for research and study of the phenomenon of 20<sup>th</sup> Century American television. It was his vision that all the material we received be preserved. I’m pleased that this collection presents rich possibilities for the development of interesting businesses focused on research and posterity in TV entertainment.”

Expertly appraised at a value of more than \$1 million, the vast archive is a goldmine of materials that, when acquired, is especially suited to various business and philanthropic missions.

*Reference and historical research:* As a reference library for a publishing or broadcast concern, this collection could form the cornerstone of a complete history of television.

*Digital content licensing:* Using digital technology, the entire collection can be scanned and digitally archived. This archive could either be hosted as a new online content delivery business or in addition to an existing image and/or content business.

*Tax-deductible philanthropic donation:* The basic expert appraisal of this collection can be requested at [www.tvcollection.com](http://www.tvcollection.com), and supports a valuation of more than \$1 million. Experts indicate that a more detailed and extensive appraisal will likely result in a higher valuation, providing the basis for tax benefits from donating this collection to a recognized organization.

*Substantial break-up value:* The basic appraisal of the collection was derived from evaluating it in its entirety as a single archive. However, many of the individual files form mini-collections with potentially higher break-up value when sold to fans and collectors.

### **About the TV Collection**

Television began to invade the American home during the 1950s. At that time, television guides in newspapers as we now know them were nonexistent. In the early 1960s, Al and Polly Vonetes started a small business to assemble and produce television guide inserts for daily newspapers in Virginia and North Carolina. Later augmented with personal interviews from many of the stars, the company eventually wrote their own reviews of shows and created unique features from the information gathered. With ever increasing success, by 1980 the company founded by the Voneteses was operating in eight states and its rapid expansion caught the attention of newspaper giant, Scripps-Howard. United Media, a Scripps-Howard Company, acquired the family enterprise in 1982.

The collection, begun many years earlier by Al and Polly Vonetes, was sold back to the Vonetes family by Scripps-Howard in 1983 and they continued to maintain it even as the existing networks grew and new networks emerged. Al and Polly Vonetes later launched Television Newsfeatures Syndicate, which provided interviews and content to national publications, syndicates, and international television networks showing syndicated American programming.

For more information on the TV Collection, or to see details on auction rules and how to place a bid please visit [www.tvcollection.com](http://www.tvcollection.com) or call Robert Lee at (206) 778-1882. All serious bidders are encouraged to inspect the materials at [www.tvcollection.com](http://www.tvcollection.com), and may view the collection in Hopewell, Virginia (by appointment only). All bidders must contact Robert Lee at (206) 778-1882 prior to placing a bid.

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