

Popularity of Hartland sports figurines grows

Sports and non-sports figurines are very popular collectibles. The statues are now manufactured by many companies such as Gartlan, Salvino, McFarlane, Romito Enterprises and Starting Lineup.

However, the company that really put figurines on the map was Hartland. Many collectors now between the ages of 45 and 55 either owned Hartland statues or knew of them. The popularity of the Hartland figures continues to rise.

Following is a little bit of the company's history:

Hartland Plastics of Hartland, Wis., first produced a series of baseball, football, and Western statues.

What really elevated Hartland Plastics to prominence was the baseball set it issued from 1958-1962. Being from Wisconsin, Hartland took advantage of the popularity of the champion Milwaukee Braves baseball team. The original baseball set consisted of nine players each from the American and National Leagues, as well a batboy and a minor leaguer. These sold for \$1.99.

All the players were current players, except for Babe Ruth, and included three Milwaukee Braves. The original players were: Hank Aaron, Luis Aparicio, Ernie Banks, Yogi Berra, Rocky Colavito, Don Drysdale, Nelson Fox, Dick Groat, Harmon Killebrew, Mickey Mantle, Roger Maris, Eddie Mathews, Willie Mays, Stan Musial, Babe Ruth, Duke Snider, Warren Spahn, and Ted Williams.

Because not as many statues of Rocky Colavito, and especially of Dick Groat, were made, they are the most valuable, along with

Mickey Mantle.

Along with the statue was a box with the player's name, and a tag (in the case of Roger Maris there is no tag). Depending on their condition, most of the statues are now worth about \$300. Groat, Colavito and Mantle are worth quite a bit more. Having a box and/or tag will of course, increase the value.

A 25th anniversary set was issued in the late 1980's and early 1990's of the original figures. However, the values of those statues are only a fraction of the original statues.

Hartland figurines are very realistic, which has always appealed to collectors. The player's faces and their stances are extremely lifelike.

From 1959-1963 Hartland issued a football series. The original Hartland footballer was a promotion at a Louisiana State University game. The likeness of the figure was presumably of star running back Billy Cannon.

The football series eventually wound up being a lineman and a running back for each of the 14 teams that were then part of the National Football League, plus a lineman and running back for LSU, and statues of a couple of

professional stars at that time, Jon Arnett and Johnny Unitas. The most valuable pieces are the ones depicting the LSU players.

Jeff specializes in collecting sports, presidential/historical and

celebrity/entertainment memorabilia and has a popular radio show "Sports Collecting with Jeff Figler." Listen to "Sports Collecting with Jeff Figler," the radio

show airs in St. Louis on KSLG 1380 AM every Sunday from 8 a.m. to 10 a.m. You can also listen to the show online at www.team1380.net.

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