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## **Legendary T206 Honus Wagner Baseball Trading Card for Sale on eBay**

### **Mona Lisa of Baseball Trading Cards to be Sold by Robert Edward Auctions on eBay**

SAN JOSE, Calif. and WATCHUNG, NJ, June 6, 2000 — eBay® (NASDAQ: EBAY; www.ebay.com), the world's leading person-to-person online trading community, and Robert Edward Auctions, a division of Mastronet, Inc., today announced that the legendary T206 Honus Wagner baseball card, previously owned by Wayne Gretzky, will be sold on eBay beginning July 5, 2000. Bidding on the 10-day auction will start at \$500,000.

"The T206 Honus Wagner trading card is the Mona Lisa of all trading cards - universally recognized as the most valuable and desirable among collectors and dealers alike," said Robert Lifson, director of Robert Edward Auctions.

Experts predict the item may bring a new record price for a baseball trading card. The current record is \$641,500 for the same T206 Honus Wagner PSA 8 NM-MT (Near Mint-to-Mint) sold in 1996.

The card's legend is inherent to its rarity and value. As part of its landmark 523 card T206 baseball issue, the American Tobacco Company intended to issue a trading card set - inserted into packs of cigarettes - including Wagner's likeness, as well as other baseball stars of the day. Wagner, however, reportedly objected to the use of his name in association with smoking and demanded that the company stop production and distribution of his likeness in the set.

It is believed that only about 50 or 60 Honus Wagner cards were ever distributed, but only a handful have been sold publicly. While these known cards vary widely in quality, they all bring record sales. According to the 25 highest recorded sales of significant baseball cards sold at public auction, three different T206 Honus Wagner in varying conditions are the most expensive trading cards ever sold.

John Peter "Honus" Wagner, otherwise known as "The Flying Dutchman", was one of the five initial inductees to baseball's Hall of Fame and is considered as one of the greatest shortstops in history. He entered the major league in 1897 as a Louisville outfielder. In 1899 Wagner moved to the Pittsburgh Pirates for a stellar 18-year career before retiring in 1917. Later, he coached the Pirates for 20 years.

Recognized by collectors as the most famous and valuable baseball card in the world this T206 Honus Wagner card has a unique and storied provenance:

- The card was purchased in 1996 for a record \$641,500 by its current owner, well-known sports collector Michael Gidwitz.
- In 1995 the card was sold to Wal-Mart for an undisclosed amount, reported to have been in excess of \$500,000 for use in a nationally advertised sales contest. The lucky winner, Patricia Gibbs, a postal worker from Florida offered the card at auction to help pay the tax liability on the winnings.
- Previous owners include former hockey star Wayne Gretzky and Los Angeles Kings owner Bruce McNall, who paid \$451,000 for the Wagner card in 1991.

"Offering this rare and celebrated trading card on eBay will allow a broader audience of people to feel a part of this significant auction," said Brian Swette, chief operating officer at eBay. "Every time this card is sold it generates record sales and excitement in the world of collecting. We are pleased to be part of this historic event."

Robert Edward Auctions is conducting a special auction for The T206 Wagner Card using the eBay system. Special rules apply for this auction. Prospective bidders must pre-register and become "approved bidders" with Robert Edward Auctions. In order to qualify to bid on the T206 Wagner Card, bidders will be required to wire a deposit of \$100,000 to iEscrow.com. Robert Edward Auctions will contact each bidder individually to create a personal account, including verifying each bidder's identity and personal information. Robert Edward Auctions will work with each approved bidder to agree in writing to the specific rules for this auction. Only pre-qualified bidders will be able to bid on the T206 Honus Wagner card.

The card will be unveiled at a press conference on June 6 at 10:30 am at Mickey Mantle's restaurant in New York City.

The Wagner card is the featured item in the summer auction of Robert Edward Auctions that will include more than 1000 sports memorabilia items. For more information or to obtain an auction catalog, please call Robert Edward auctions at 908-226-9900.

### **About eBay**

eBay ([www.ebay.com](http://www.ebay.com)), the world's personal trading community™, pioneered person-to-person online trading. Founded in 1995, eBay has developed an efficient and entertaining trading site on the Web that is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. eBay has more than 12 million registered users. Currently, there are more than 4 million items listed for sale. More than 500,000 items are added daily in more than 4,300 categories, including: antiques; automotive; books, movies and music; coins and stamps; collectibles; computers; dolls and figures; jewelry and gemstones; photos and electronics; pottery and glass; sports memorabilia; and toys.

### **About Mastronet, Inc.**

Mastronet, Inc. of Oak Brook, Ill., is a leading sports memorabilia auction company in the U.S., and consists of five divisions including Mastro Fine Sports, Robert Edward Auctions ([www.robertedwardauctions.com](http://www.robertedwardauctions.com)), Mastro West Auctions, Ron Oser Enterprises and Mastronet.com. The company has offered and sold many of the most famous and valuable sports items ever offered to the public market, including Robert Edwards Auctions' sales of the Lou Gehrig uniform worn when he delivered the "luckiest man alive" speech in 1939. Mastronet's Mastro Fine Sports Division has recently conducted sales which realized \$5.5 million in March 1999, \$7.2 in November 1999 and \$5.8 million in May 2000.