

## **SOTHEBY'S TO SELL THE SINGLE-OWNER COLLECTION OF SILVER TROPHIES FORMED BY VICTOR NIEDERHOFFER, AT SOTHEBY'S ON DECEMBER 15, 1998**

***-- Largest collection of silver trophies ever to come to auction --  
-- Sports represented include yachting, tennis, golf, billiards and boxing --***

New York -- A unique collection of silver trophies honoring heroes of war, sport, humanity and freedom over the last 200 years, is to be sold by Sotheby's on behalf of Victor Niederhoffer, well known Wall Street trader and former squash champion. The sale, which is estimated at more than \$2 million, will be held on Tuesday, December 15, 1998.

Mr Niederhoffer said: "It is with combined exhilaration, sadness and remorse that I sell the fruits of my collecting over the last 20 years. The collection began when I was a squash champion and I coveted the fancy presentation pieces which I was able to hold during the presentation ceremony. Once I started collecting, I pursued it with a passion and if a piece was heroic, historic and unique, I bid on it. I hope that these pieces will stir the spirit of heroism and beauty among collectors the way they have for their many owners in the past."

The proudest trophy of all is probably the five-foot tall silver sculptural group depicting Victory, her wings outstretched, riding on the back of an eagle and holding aloft a victory wreath. The sculpture was made for Visconde de Figueiredo in Rio de Janeiro in 1889 and cast in Paris by L Meissner. It was probably made to commemorate Figueiredo's role in the overthrow of the Brazilian monarchy and the establishment of the Republic on November 15, 1889. This was also the year that he founded the Banco Nacional, one of the largest banks in Latin America. The designer, Alfred-Desire Lanson (1851-1898) won The Prix de Rome of 1876 and the Grand Prix at the Paris Exhibition of 1889. The monumental piece, which weighs 3,871 ounces, is estimated at \$200,000-300,000. Sporting trophies include lavish sculptural works from the heyday of yacht racing at the turn of the century such as the Lipton Cup, commissioned by Sir Thomas Lipton (est. \$12/15,000), and the Bennett Indian Yacht Trophy ordered in 1894 by James Gordon Bennett, the flamboyant owner of the Herald Tribune, estimated at \$120,000-140,000.

Horse racing trophies include the Goodwood Cup 1884, the Travers Stakes 1876, the Grand National Trophy 1929 and the Ascot Gold Cup also for 1929 (estimate: \$20,000-30,000) designed by Charles Sykes, creator of 'The Spirit of Ecstasy' mascot for Rolls Royce.

Many pieces mark historic events such as a tray honoring the abolition of slavery in Mauritius in 1818, a salver marking the establishment of the first bank in British Guyana and a cup given to a leader in one of the first workers' unions in England, celebrating the verdict of justifiable homicide of a brutal policeman (est. \$800/1,200). Unusual presentation pieces include a musical tugboat, circa 1875 (est. \$20/30,000), a detailed model of a New Orleans street car and a loud-hailer presented by the President for a 'humane' act at sea. Other trophies commemorate military successes such as a battle in the War of 1812, estimated at \$2,000-3,000.

To honor such events, the finest makers were employed such as Paul Storr, Garrard and Elkington & Co., among the English silver, and Tiffany and Gorham in the American trophies. It was demanded of these makers that they produce the highest quality and the most creative designs - the best work to honor the best endeavors. A number of pieces were shown at the great International expositions - London, 1862; Vienna, 1873; Chicago, 1893; Paris, 1900 and St. Louis, 1904. One of the more unusual lots is a silver-gilt inkstand made in London in 1842 with two horse hoof inkwells and a tripod stand holding a bullet. An inscription reads: "In memory of an exceptional war-horse who in his youth received a grave wound at the Battle of Waterloo; you see here the bullet taken from his testicles at death and two of his hooves." 'Old George', as he was remembered, lived until the age of 33 and was buried with full honors. It is estimated at \$10,000-15,000.