

Preston Evans, after decades of collecting and holding auctions, will hold a massive retirement auction, October 10 & 11

His auction firm – Preston Opportunities – has the slogan, 'Where Rare is Common.' Those words will be on full display in the 1,100+-lot auction, in Macon, Ga.

MACON, GA, UNITED STATES, September 8, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Preston Evans has dropped hints in the past that the next auction on his calendar would be his last, but there was always a longtime friend's estate that needed liquidating, or a major consignor would beat a path to his door that he couldn't turn away. Fate always conspired to keep him in the game, a game he'd been playing for decades. Only this time it's different.

The legendary Georgia-based auctioneer – who was featured on TV's American Pickers and whose property is home to a veritable museum of rare and highly collectible items in a rainbow of categories – will finally sail off into retirement following one last hurrah: a two-day monster auction planned for October 10th and 11th at a former church building Evans owns in Macon.

"My motto has always been, 'Where Rare is Common,' and at no time will that be more true than in my farewell auction event," Evans said. "My wife's been after me to do this for years, and I finally gave in. It's time for other folks to enjoy what I've been holding onto for a long, long time." The venue is located at 8964 Thomaston Road in Macon, just off of Highway 74.

To say the merchandise mix is eclectic would be a gross understatement. The more than 1,100



Life-size statue with plaque of Leo the Lion, whose roar to this day still signals the start of an MGM movie. Leo was the most famous of all the MGM animals, trained by Captain Phifer.

lots will include [relics from MGM Studios](#) dating to Hollywood's Golden Age; movie posters from the 1930s and '40s; vintage cars and motorcycles; coin-ops and music machines (to include arcade games and jukeboxes); antique automatons; boat motors; carousel animals; and records.

Day 1, starting at 9am Eastern time, will be live-only; no internet bidding. Items will include jukeboxes and speakers; coin-ops and Coke machines; tin toys; boat motors; and some (but not all) of the carousel animals. Day 2, also at 9am, will feature the big-ticket items. Online bidding will be available, through LiveAuctioneers.com. Phone and absentee bids will also be accepted.

The MGM items, now owned by Evans, were previously owned by Volney Phifer (1898-1974), known in the movie industry as Captain Phifer and world famous for being the chief wrangler of most of the animals used on a vast array of MGM films from the silent era up to the late 1950s. After he died in 1974, his collection went to his sister-in-law, who put it up for auction through Mr. Evans's firm, [Preston Opportunities](#). Evans purchased many of the items for his collection.



Circa 1905 automaton by the famous Parisian maker Roulett & Decamps, titled The Dutch Drunkard, 43 inches tall, pictured in front of two original Western movie posters from the 1930s.

The MGM items include the following:

- A life-size statue with plaque of Leo the Lion, whose roar to this day still signals the start of an MGM movie. Leo was the most famous of all the MGM animals, even more famous than Cheetah the Tarzan ape and Toto from The Wizard of Oz. Captain Volney traveled widely touring Leo the Lion around in a caravan to trumpet the latest MGM film.
 - A life-size mechanical elephant whose stomach moves as he “breathes” in and out and his ears wave and his tail wags. A surefire conversation starter!
 - A lobby display statue of actor Johnny Weissmuller’s Tarzan character, shown swinging from a vine.
 - Many negatives from the photographs Volney took as he traveled the world on MGM tours.

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Vehicles in the auction will be led by a beautiful [1951 Jaguar Mk V drop head coupe](#) that's undergone an extensive renovation. 1951 was the model's last year of production (only 108 of the cars were produced between 1948 and 1951). The many features include a 3.5-liter engine with a 4-speed transmission fitted to a right-hand drive chassis, a desirable three-position convertible top with functioning landau irons, gorgeous two-tone paint, burl walnut dash and recent leather interior.

Also offered will be a burgundy red 1949 Lincoln Cosmopolitan two-door coupe, known to car buffs as a "Hot Rod Lincoln", recently restored and in very good overall condition. This was Lincoln's first new car following World War II and the first with a streamlined body. Features include a Ford flathead 337 c.i. engine producing 152 hp, a beautiful body design with factory frenched headlights and taillights, and a distinctive front windshield visor. Top speed: 91 mph.

Completing the trinity of rare, desirable automobiles is a 1949 Willys-Overland Jeep, a fun family vehicle catering to GI's who'd returned home from service following World War II. This sporty rear-wheel-drive convertible features a 4-cylinder "Go Devil" engine, a three-speed manual transmission with overdrive and an accessory searchlight on the A-pillar. For those who prefer their cars to be of the super-old variety, also sold will be a Ford Model T and a Model A.

In addition to the vehicles, there will also be a stash of antique car parts being offered both days.

The automatons up for bid are true antiques and will include the following examples:

- The Dutch Drunkard, circa 1905, by the famous Paris automaton maker Roulett & Decamps, 43 inches tall by 20 inches wide. As he sits on his oak chair, grinning and looking from side to side,



Gorgeous 1951 Jaguar Mk V drop head coupe that's undergone an extensive renovation. 1951 was the model's last year of production (108 of the cars were produced between 1948 and 1951).



Massive, 18-foot-wide neon Hollywood sign, pictured with some of the jukeboxes up for bid.

the wooden-shoed Dutchman pours himself a drink and brings the liquid to his moving lips. Complete with voltage coil for 110, 150, 220 or 250 volts.

- Nègre Fumeur No. 365 (The Black Smoker), also by Roulette & Decamps, from the R&D 1878 catalog. The elegant gentleman dressed in silk and velvet seated on a bamboo chair puffs his pipe while the music plays and his head, eyes and lips move. Two feet tall.
- A circa 1880 Joueur de Guitare Ménéstral (Minstrel Guitar Player) by Léopold Lambert. A young Caucasian male in black face is elegantly dressed in silk coat, pants and top hat for a minstrel show.

Clocks will feature a beautiful French mahogany clock featuring automata of children playing on a playground constructed in a shadow box grandmother clock motif. The fretwork date on the handmade pendulum is 1826. The cabinet is 71 inches tall by 20 inches wide. It has a walnut face and ivory numerals. Beneath the cabinet are two porcelain dolls in lace playing on a teeter-totter.

Also up for bid is a rare and impressive Bayer Swiss automated clock, created around 1840 and hand-tooled with the maker's name. An eight-bell music box plays as a crystal waterfall appears to rain between the clock and the music box. The entertainment is a tiny ivory acrobat doing flips on a trapeze to the sound of the chimes, as an ivory globe and Oriental pagoda spin around him.

Coin-ops and music machines will be plentiful, with the possible headliner being The Star Trade Register, one of the three most collectible cigar store trades stimulators. The one in the sale, circa 1903, features a Regina coin-op disc music mechanism. It appears to be one of just five survivors bearing the name Star Trade Register. One resides in the Vermont Historical Society Museum.

The Wurlitzer 2100 CD jukebox is made to look like the 1956 Wurlitzer and is capable of playing up to 100 CDs. It boasts nice chrome and is in perfect condition, with amazing sound quality and an awesome digital display. It comes complete with remote control, key and manual.

The Mills Violano-Virtuoso was an amazing coin-op music machine made by the Mills Novelty Chicago from 1910-1928, when it was supplanted by the jukebox. It had an automatic playing violin accompanied by a cleverly designed 44-note piano. This beautiful example has been fully restored and has a ribbon grain mahogany cabinet and beveled glass windows. It's 68 inches tall.



The Star Trade Register, one of the three most collectible cigar store trades stimulators, circa 1903, featuring a Regina coin-op disc music mechanism, one of perhaps just five survivors.

A Hallett Davis & Company (Boston) piano that dates to 1875-1880 is in beautiful condition and features ebony lacquer and East Indian book matched rosewood, all heavily gilded and done up in a lovely upright cabinet grand. Hallett Davis pianos are on par with the finest Steinways. At the Paris Exhibition of 1867, the noted composer Franz List used one for all of his performances.

The Seeburg multi Rayolite Rifle Range Model G-1 was the very first "Light Reading" shooting gallery game. It's often referred to as the Chicken Sam shooting gallery. The example up for bid is extremely rare, in immaculate condition and works fine. It comes complete with rifle and all.

The Dornlion of New York harmonium pipe organ is a truly spectacular instrument, housed in a gorgeous quarter-sawn white oak cabinet that's 106 inches tall by 72 inches wide and topped by an impressive array of gilded reed pipes. It was crafted circa 1900 by Dornlion of NY-Worcester.

Original movie posters from Hollywood's Golden Age will include a three-sheet (39 inches by 78 inches) poster for Swifty (Diversion Pictures, 1935), starring Hoot Gibson; a one-sheet (27 inches by 41 inches) poster for Starlight Over Texas (Monogram, 1938), starring Tex Ritter; and a one-sheet (same size) for Song of the Buckaroo (Monogram, 1938), also starring Tex Ritter.

Other noteworthy items in the auction include a massive, 18-foot-wide neon Hollywood sign; a Tiffany & Company 12-light table lamp, stamped "Tiffany Studios NY 383" on the base; a 1997 Harley-Davidson motorcycle; and a custom-built mini-bike-motorcycle "Black Magic" hybrid.

There will be a preview on Thursday, October 9th, from 3-7 pm Eastern Time, at the venue. Doors will open on auction days, October 10th and 11th, at 8am for previews and registration.

To learn more about this very important two-day auction planned for Friday and Saturday, October 10th and 11th in Macon, Ga., visit www.prestonopportunities.com. To inquire about purchasing a brochure, or for any other matters, send an email to presto434343@yahoo.com. or kdbaswell01@yahoo.com. Preston Opportunities can be reached by phone at 478-461-4931.

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