

PRICELESS

Avid baseball collector Marshall Fogel will be sharing his pieces in an exhibit called "Hall of Legends" July 10-18 at The Rally Hotel at McGregor Square, including a "gem mint 10" Mickey Mantle card.

BY KEVIN HENRY

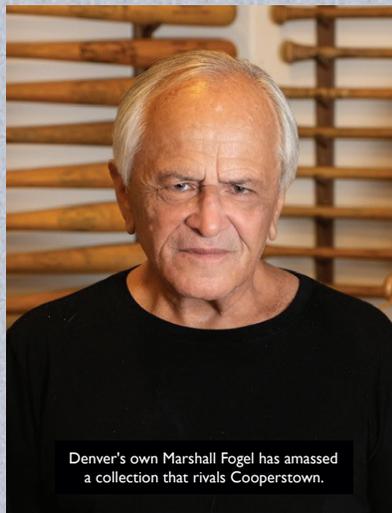
Much has changed in downtown Denver since the last time the Colorado Rockies hosted Major League Baseball's All-Star Game. That was, after all, a whole other century when MLB's best descended upon LoDo for the 1998 Midsummer Classic.

When baseball's best come to Denver this July, and All-Star Game fans join them for a celebration of America's pastime, they will have a chance to once again witness a collection of baseball memorabilia that has become a passion of Marshall Fogel, a local collector who wants people to remember just how the game brings generations together.

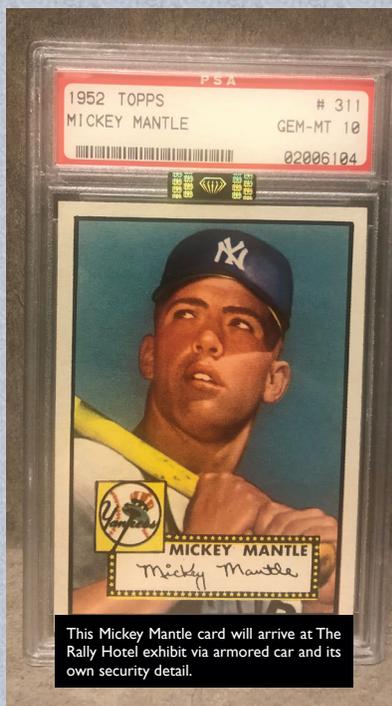
"If you look at the last 20 seconds of *The Natural* with Robert Redford and *Field of Dreams* with Kevin Costner, they both have something in common. They show fathers and sons playing catch, and that, to me, is what baseball is all about," Fogel says. "My message to the parents and grandparents, and uncles and aunts, and so on, is to play catch with your kid. They will never forget it."

As James Earl Jones said in *Field of Dreams*, when he was explaining just why baseball was so special: "The one constant through all the years, Ray, has been baseball. America has rolled by like an army of steamrollers. It's been erased like a blackboard, rebuilt and erased again. But baseball has marked the time."

Fogel has marked the time of baseball's march by building a collection of memorabilia that is unmatched outside of the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, N.Y. From a bat used by Wee Willie Keeler to the uniform that Joe DiMaggio was wearing when he hit his last home run, to a 1952 Mickey Mantle



Denver's own Marshall Fogel has amassed a collection that rivals Cooperstown.



This Mickey Mantle card will arrive at The Rally Hotel exhibit via armored car and its own security detail.

baseball card that is the most sought-after card in the world, nicknamed "the Holy Grail of baseball cards," Fogel has worked for decades to build his collection that features players from Babe Ruth to Nolan Ryan. When the All-Star Game comes to Denver in July, baseball fans will be able to get up close to these pieces of baseball history.

Set to be a part of more than 30 distinct pieces of legendary baseball history on display on the second floor of The Rally Hotel at McGregor Square (directly across 20th Street from Coors Field), Fogel's collection of memorabilia will remind fans of the greatness of the game before they go watch the greatest players of our current generation compete at Coors Field.

Fogel, a retired Denver prosecutor and private practice attorney who started his collecting journey in 1989, has spent decades in pursuit of baseball history. He shared it with baseball fans when they came to the All-Star Game in 1998. He watched as people viewed his collection at the History Colorado Center during an exhibit in 2018, timed to coincide with the Rockies home opener at 20th and Blake.

By sharing his collection, Fogel believes he can brighten the imagination of young fans and bring back memories for their older relatives. He also believes he can remind people exactly why baseball is so special in a world filled with sports.

"If you look at basketball, it takes five people to score a basket. It takes 11 people to score a touchdown in football. It takes a

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multitude of people to score a goal in a hockey game. However, in baseball, you have the singular hero," Fogel smiles. "Only one person can hit a home run. When you're standing at the plate, you will have nine enemies, facing you and trying to stop you. The pitcher is 60 feet, six inches away. After he has completed his stride toward home plate, he is less than 60 feet away from the batter and the ball is traveling close to 100 miles an hour. As a batter, you have a 33-ounce bat to swing and get a hit to help score a run. To me, it's exciting."

Fogel says it's also exciting for his collection to be a part of what will eventually become a home for all things Rockies-related inside the newly built McGregor Square, named after Keli McGregor, the team's president who passed away suddenly in 2010 but left a lasting mark on the franchise.

"The exhibit will continue in the future, and I will continue to put new items in there so that the interest in coming to see sports memorabilia will be there for the future as well," Fogel says.

Jim Kellogg, vice president of community and retail operations for the Rockies, believes that Fogel's contributions to the All-Star Game experience and beyond are a boon for Denver and the region.

"It's awesome to have something like this available for fans to experience," Kellogg says. "A collection like this gives fans the chance to witness pieces of baseball history first-hand. It's a great opportunity for the city of Denver and for fans alike.

"While the Rockies may be a relatively young franchise, we know the baseball fans in the region have deep roots," he continues. "All of those, local and beyond, who come to see this exhibit are going to be amazed. Denver is blessed to have someone like Marshall Fogel as a part of our community."

Fogel also hopes that his work and the continued building and display of it will inspire others to pursue their passions for collecting what they love. And the avid collector has some advice for the next generation of those wanting to create their own ensemble of memorabilia.

"Over the years that I've collected, I've collected horizontally. That means I was trying to get different subjects like bats and signed balls, as well as baseball cards, magazines, World Series programs, and such," Fogel says. "I think it's better to collect horizontally rather than vertically, where you just collect things



The Fogel collection includes dozens of rare pieces, among them memorabilia featuring Hank Aaron (top, glove and photo with Mantle) and Joe DiMaggio (bottom, jersey).



from one team. If you're a Yankees fan or a Rockies fan, you collect everything on the subject, and that's collecting vertically. However, when you do that, you start collecting things that aren't really important just because they're affiliated with a team rather than the game itself.

"But the one thing about collecting that I think is really important is this: There's something in it for everybody, whether you spend \$50 or \$50,000."

While the All-Star Game will leave a temporary mark on downtown Denver in mid-July, Fogel smiles because he knows the connection between the past and present of baseball will live on well after the game's premier summer event leaves town.

"The pleasure I get is having it displayed so the community in Colorado and the region can come and see it," Fogel says. "It's just an experience I want the community to enjoy, and I love doing it." ♦

Tickets to the Hall of Legends are \$10, all of which goes to the Colorado Rockies Foundation. Ticket information is available at Rockies.com/HallofLegends.

PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF THE MARSHALL FOGEL COLLECTION