

## The Value of Stuff

Leslie Hindman has served as president of the Midwest's premier auction firm. Each year, she auctioned millions of dollars worth of decorative arts and home furnishings from the estates of the wealthy.

This is a world of Van Gogh paintings and black lacquered desks that sell for tens of thousands of dollars. Nevertheless, her career has made material things one of the least of her priorities.

"I see people fighting about their stuff all the time," she said. "You realize life is not about possessions."

A few experiences early in Hindman's career helped to cinch her disdain for material goods, says writer Adrienne Fawcett in the *Chicago Tribune*. "Once, she was hired to hold an auction in the modest home of a suburban family whose mother recently had died. As Hindman held court, the siblings bid against each other for their mother's humble possessions, scarcely exchanging a word."

Another experience she will never get over was finding "a lifetime of diaries in the apartment of an elderly Oak Park woman who saved everything but had no children to whom to leave her things. Hindman tried to donate the diaries to historical societies, but none wanted them. She saved them for a couple of years but finally threw them out."

"So," Hindman says emphatically, "I save absolutely nothing."

After all is said and done, the true value of possessions is clearly seen. I have heard this all my life, and it is true: "You don't see a U-Haul trailer behind a hearse in a funeral procession."

--Beecher Hunter