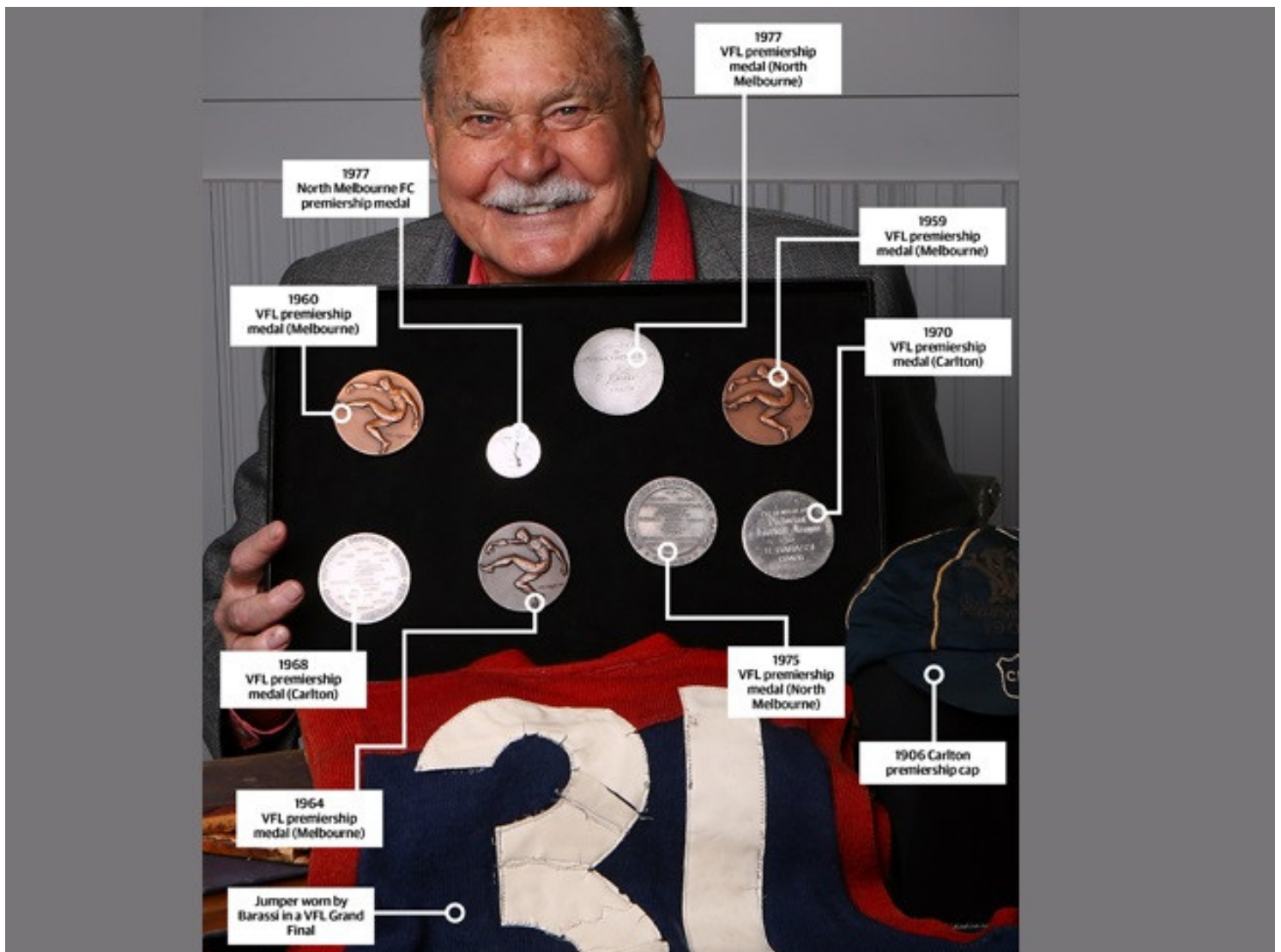


AFL memorabilia: Legend Ronald Barassi's private collection to be offered for public auction

Jon Anderson, Herald Sun
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THE extraordinary private collection of Australian footballing legend Ronald Dale Barassi, conservatively valued at more than \$500,000, is to be offered for public auction.

In agreement with his family, Barassi, 80, has decided the time is right to sell collectables dating back 135 years — from his career, that of his father Ron Sr who was killed at Tobruk in 1941, and from a lifetime of collecting his own memorabilia.



His collection includes items as varied as the point post Leigh Matthews broke in half at Windy Hill in 1982, to a 1906 Carlton Premiership cap from when they beat Fitzroy in the grand final.

Ron Barassi with some of his memorabilia. Picture: Wayne Ludbey

South Yarra-based auction house Leonard Joel will hold the auction on Sunday, September 4 for what is believed to be easily the most comprehensive and most valuable of any previous Australian rules offering.

“It’s football’s equivalent of Don Bradman, but in some ways Ron Barassi’s life traverses wider, given its links to Australian social, cultural and war history. From our perspective such an offering is unprecedented,” said John Albrecht, managing director of Leonard Joel.

“Take the wrist watch belonging to Ron Barassi Sr, which was repatriated from Tobruk complete with his name engraved and soldier’s number on the back. It will be offered along with Ron Sr’s wallet and pocket knife. Then there is the photo album Ron’s mother put together in incredible detail.”



Ron Barassi with his father's watch Picture: Wayne Ludbey



Ron Barassi with a 1914 Football Record. Picture: Wayne Ludbey

When viewing the collection on Friday, Barassi admitted to being “very impressed”: “You never know I might even put a bid in myself,” he said with a chuckle.

“Seriously, these items have given me so much joy for so many years that I now hope someone can get the same pleasure from them. I guess in a way it would be nice if one person bought the lot and put them on public display but I understand that is unlikely to happen.”

Barassi released a statement explaining his reason for selling: “I have enjoyed the journey behind the awards, the mementos, the historic pieces, the souvenirs and curiosities. Now is a good time to share these treasures with the collecting community.

“I hope that in the caring hands of public institutions (sporting museums, libraries) and private collectors these items will bring pleasure to a wide public and be best preserved for the social and historic interest of future generations. And I’m glad my family will have a permanent record of my collection without the responsibility.”

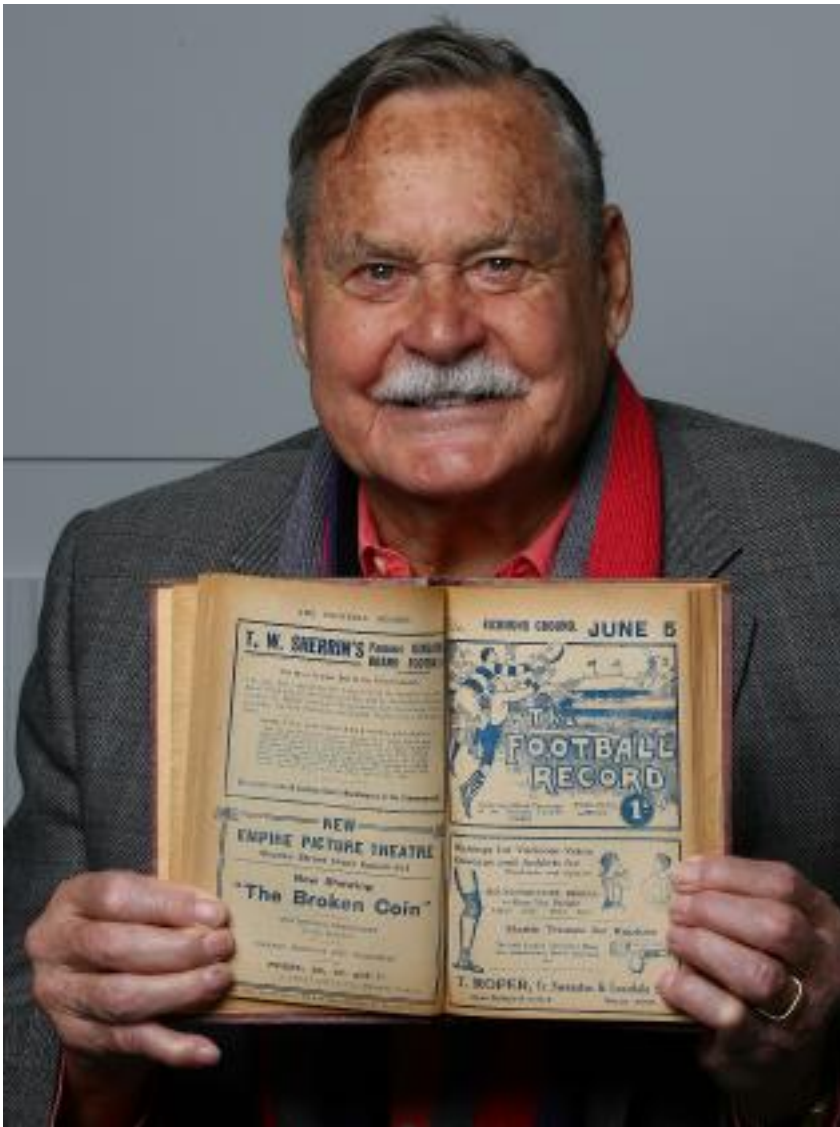


Ron

Barassi's Melbourne playing jumper (losing grandfinal) Picture: Wayne Ludbey



Ron Barassi's Carlton premiership cap 1906 Picture: Wayne Ludbey



Ron Barassi with an old football record. Picture: Wayne Ludbey

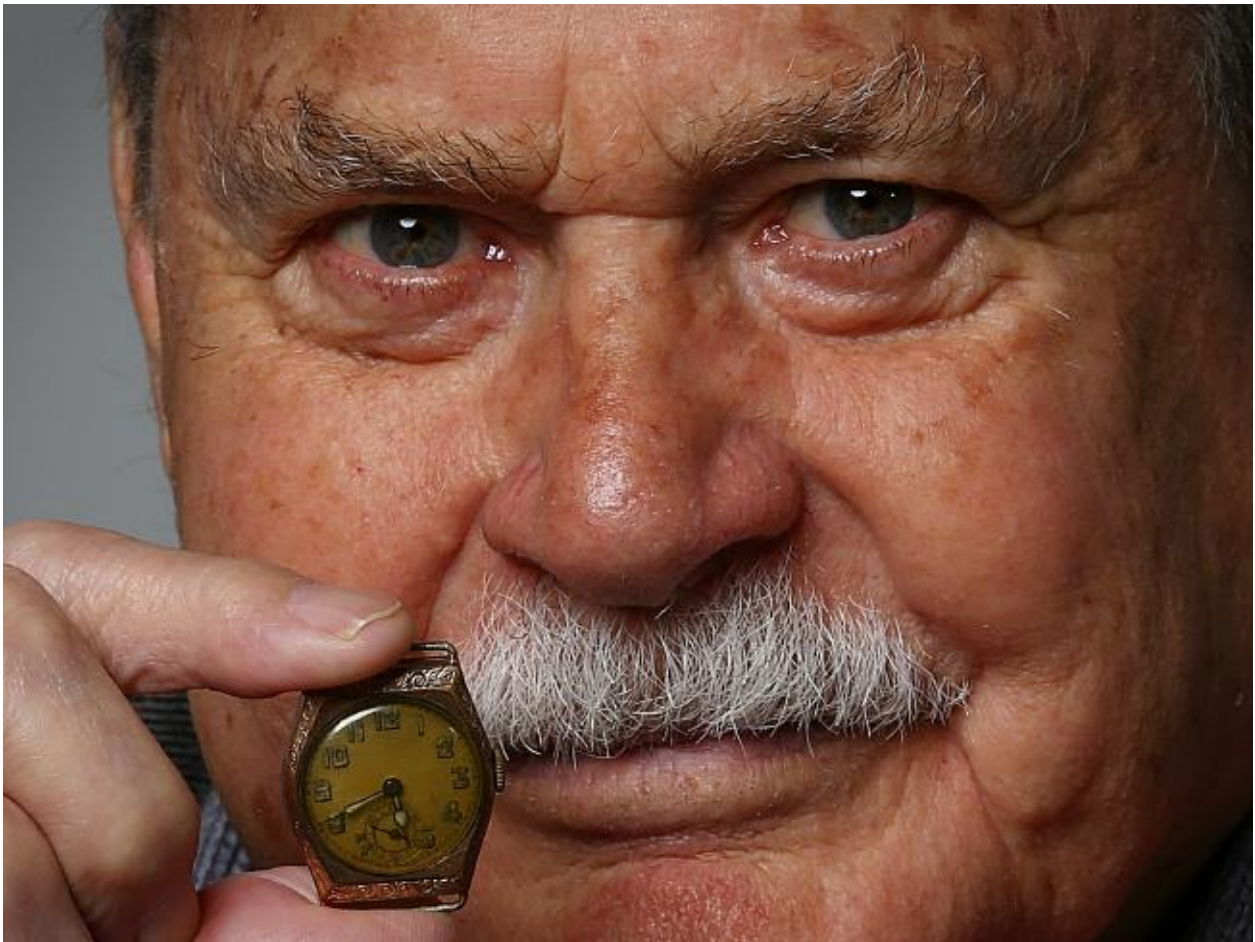
North Melbourne coach Ron Barassi circa 1980.

John Albrecht said it's a natural question when anyone decides to sell something that so valuable, and so personal: "It's a valid question but it is quite common for people around Ron's age to sell their collections. And Ron has more than one child so, for instance, who do you give the watch to? My impression as an observer is that the family is content that this is the right time (to sell)," Albrecht said.

"His preference would be that some items will end up in the public domain. Maybe the Australian War Memorial will take interest in some items."

At one stage Barassi flirted with the idea of establishing his own AFL museum, and when he ran the Mountain View Hotel in Richmond in the 1980s-90s he started collecting pieces — such as the Matthews point post — which he put on display upstairs in the hotel.

In more recent times the Hawthorn Football Club has had the post on display in its museum after Barassi loaned it to them. Another collecting passion involved any form of early football literature, including a 1879 publication called *The Footballer*.



Ron Barassi with his father's watch. Picture: Wayne Ludbey



Ron Barassi with his memorabilia collection. Picture: Wayne Ludbey

Then there are Football Records dating back to 1914, running through to the 1950s. From the Fifties is the famous No. 31 worn by Barassi in a Grand Final for Melbourne.

And of course there are the 10 Premiership medals won by Barassi, six as a player for Melbourne between 1955-64, two with Carlton as coach in 1968 and 1970, and a further two when coaching North Melbourne in 1975 and 1977.

The collections also include his losing Grand Final medals — from 1954, 1958, 1969, 1974, 1976, and 1978.

In total the items run to more than 1000 but have been condensed into 400-odd lots. A number of personal items, such as letters written by Barassi's father during World War II, have been retained by the family.