



Dave Bockman, a Jeff Gordon fan, poses with his collection of NASCAR memorabilia. His wife Margy gave him the jacket celebrating Gordon as a three-time Winston Cup champion. Photos by Michael Fortuna / Daily Sun

# FULL SPEED AHEAD

**Dave Bockman's NASCAR collection is mostly dedicated to Jeff Gordon**

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 By Michael Fortuna

You can almost smell the tire rubber when you walk into Dave Bockman's NASCAR room.

Bockman has gathered a large collection of NASCAR and Indianapolis 500 memorabilia and displayed it in a room specifically built for those items.

When you walk over a NASCAR Racing floormat at



Bockman's collection includes several Jeff Gordon 1/24-scale race cars.

the doorless entrance, you will spot a large Jeff Gordon rug in the center of the room.

The majority of the collection is geared toward Gordon, the man who drives the No. 24 car in the Sprint Cup Series.

"A lot of people have an interest in something," Bochman said. "Mine's speed, racing speed. I enjoy how I got the pieces, the history behind them. Some of it is irreplaceable, no matter the cost."

"Oh, I love it," his wife, Margy, said. "As long as he enjoys it, that's fine by me."

One cabinet is filled with Gordon items, including 1/24 scale models of Gordon's various race cars that feature detailed and moving parts; and two crystalline versions of the No. 24 and No. 1 cars (the No. 1 Baby Ruth was Gordon's first ride).

Margy got Bockman a jacket commemorating Gordon's place as the Winston Cup champion in 1998, as well as his being a three-time champion.

His granddaughter even gave him a Barbie doll with Jeff Gordon garb for Christmas.

"She said, 'You need that,'" Bockman said.

Bockman has a six-pack of Coke bottles from 1992 that feature Gordon. Bockman said that at the time, Coke paid Gordon \$3 million; the following year Pepsi signed him up for \$10 million.

Another cabinet has some small die-cast replicas of Dale Earnhardt's car, a small bust of Earnhardt, a valve signed by Gordon, and a piston signed by John Force.

Other items include beer steins, small die-cast cars that came with each Daytona 500 program, die-cast cars still in the package, posters, framed ticket stubs and pins.

He even has a Jeff Gordon light-switch cover, coasters, and a knife.

Bockman framed a set of pins that name the winners of each race during the 1998 Winston Cup season. Gordon won 13 of those races, and he finished first in the standings.

Bockman, who has been to 49 out of 52 Indianapolis 500s, got to meet Gordon in Fort Wayne, Ind., around 1993.

At the time, Bockman was working for Dana Corporation, which made automotive parts, and Gordon paid the company a visit.

"He was a fine young gentleman," Bockman said.



Bockman has collected several hats related to auto racing.

The collection really took off around 1980; Bockman thinks his first item may have been a hat.

Several hats line the ceiling, including a few from the Daytona 500 and the Brickyard 400, but all of them are for display only.

"My head's too big," Bockman said. "I wish I could wear them. If someone made a hat big enough, (I'd wear that)."

He said he only can wear a visor, and he wears it to every race.

"That's my pride and joy," he said.

One of Bockman's favorite items is an armband that his mother, Luceile Bockman, and mother-in-law, Gladys Allison, wore while working as nurses during the 1931 Indianapolis 500.

"(They sat) seven rows down from the seats I had," Bockman said.

Bockman is still on the lookout for items, but they have to hold special meaning for him.

Recently, his grandson has taken a liking to the collection.

"He said, 'When you die and go to heaven, does Logan get all this racing stuff?'" said Bockman, who told him yes. "'How soon are you gonna die and to heaven?'"