

Ballots from South Africa election for sale

PHOENIX (AP) — Memorabilia is hot these days. Baseball cards and signed uniforms are bringing in big bucks from eager collectors. But sports isn't the only game in town.

Democracy, it seems, is also in demand.

Norris Barker, an American who has been teaching in black South African schools for 13 years, and stateside partner Todd Belfer are selling a piece of South Africa's first multiracial election.

For \$49.95, collectors can buy authentic unused ballots.

The two bought 1.5 million official ballots from the April election. They measure 8 inches by 18 inches, feature color photos of the 19 presidential candidates and color reproductions of their party flags.

"I think you'll find the market is going to be a mix between African Americans and the educated white familiar with politics and government," Belfer said.

The enterprise hearkens back to entrepreneurs who chipped off pieces of the Berlin Wall and sold them to commemorate the opening of communist East Germany.

Barker and Belfer paid \$2 million for the ballots, which feature South African President Nelson Mandela in the 12th spot. Above Mandela is the "Keep It Simple and Straight" party, or KISS, which has a pair of red lips for an emblem.



Todd Belfer, 27, executive vice president of Employee Solutions, shows off a pair of unused South Africa Election Ballots in his Phoenix, Ariz., office Monday. Belfer is overseeing the sale of these unused in the U.S. Part of the proceeds will go to charity. (AP Laserphoto)

One reminder of the chaos that preceded the election: The ballot's entry for the Zulu nationalist Inkatha Freedom Party and picture of its candidate, Mangosuthu Buthelezi, is put on as a sticker. A battle over whether the party would participate in the election wasn't resolved until after ballots were printed.

Selling the framed ballots, which cost from \$49.95 to

\$79.95 depending on the frame, is a money-making venture, said Belfer, a Phoenix businessman. But three percent of total sales or \$1 million, whichever is greater, will be donated to Trans-Africa and Africa, two charities that promote South African issues.

Belfer, Norris and other investors are selling the ballots through their African American Trading Co. Asked about possi-

ble objections to commercializing the election, Belfer said Mandela's new South African government auctioned the unused ballots to raise much-needed funds.

"As long as what they're doing is helpful to the South African government and to the South African people, it's all right," said the Rev. Leon Sullivan, a Philadelphia minister.