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THE SOURCE FOR LICENSING & RETAIL INTELLIGENCE

**With various new deals, special anniversaries and strong interest among consumers, celebrity icons are fun, aspirational and a safe bet in today's challenging economic environment.**

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he licensing of celebrity legends, whether building on the charm of Audrey Hepburn, the comedy of Abbott and Costello or the coolness of Johnny Cash, has been heating up as consumers worldwide, faced with tough economic times, embrace larger-than-life personalities to personify their aspirations.

Many recently signed deals are still in the initial stages of development but will certainly generate considerable interest among licensees and retailers in coming months.

GreenLight, a Corbis company, for example, signed a deal last month with the estate of Johnny Cash and June Carter Cash.

Says Diana Brobmann, senior

executive of licensing and new business development for GreenLight: "License proposals began rolling in almost immediately after word of the company's arrangements with the Cash/Carter estate were finalized. Initial product categories under development include apparel, posters, gifts, collectibles, dolls, games, puzzles and even lottery tickets."

Other properties represented by GreenLight provide their own particular kinds of excitement. GreenLight is adding 21st century character to Mae West's risqué and earthy persona through the creation of "AniMae."

"She's a really cool animated version of Mae West, who, with her sassy wit and commentary, makes this a unique license," Brobmann says. "Mae West was way ahead of her time. We already have licensees lined up for bags, sleepwear and T-shirts."

## Legacy Licensing Lives On

Both AniMae and West herself, in her classic black-and-white iconography, will make appearances on products.

Another example from GreenLight's portfolio is Steve McQueen, which has a multi-tiered program that supports the actor's brand. A Hollywood line for mass market has developed a variety of goods—not all of which will be low-priced. The 2008 Ford Bullitt Mustang commemorating the McQueen movie, listed for more than \$30,000. A Great Escape collection centered on apparel will hit retail stores by the holiday season with Vintage 55. The Hollywood line complements a racing line, which features Matisse-Motorcycle motocross bikes and a line of apparel sold through Triumph motorcycle dealerships. A Steve McQueen licensed Triumph motorcycle is under consideration. Also,

Tony Curtis' art brought in more than a \$1 million last year.

