



Immediate Release

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Gail Folwell To Create “The NFL Draft” Sculpture for The ELEVEN

Artist **Gail Folwell**, nationally recognized and awarded for her realistic sculptures of athletes in action, has been awarded the second commission in **The ELEVEN**, a \$2.2 million public art project of ArtsinStark and the Pro Football Hall of Fame celebrating the greatest moments in professional football history. Her work, depicting **The NFL Draft**, will reside in Canton, Ohio, the birthplace of the National Football League (September 17, 1920), and the home of the eventual 11 public art pieces to be completed in 2020 for the 100th anniversary of the NFL.

Folwell was first recognized in 2013 by the selection committee for The ELEVEN when she submitted her qualifications and designs for the first piece in the Canton project, “The Birth of the NFL,” which recognizes Canton, Ohio as the birthplace of the NFL. Another Colorado artist, Michael Clapper, was awarded the commission, dedicated in August 2014 by Roger Goodell during Pro Football Hall of Fame Enshrinement festivities.

But Folwell, who returned to Boulder, was not forgotten. Her work and her spirit rose above the remaining 80 submissions vying for the next \$150,000 commission and a place in this historic collection. As such, Folwell was asked to return to Canton, and choose one of the remaining 10 moments to create.

“Her design is fun, engaging, and memorable” says ArtsinStark board chair Max Deuble, who was part of the six-member Selection Committee for “**The NFL Draft**” along with John Curran, Sally Morse Dale, Mike Gill, Louise Mahoney, and Mark Samolczyk. “And we think visitors will want to climb up on the concrete pedestal and have their picture taken with the five bronze players.”

Sponsors for “**The NFL Draft**” sculpture are: 1) the George H. Deuble Foundation, 2) The Hoover Foundation, 3) Stark Community Foundation, and 4) Timken Foundation of Canton. *In-Kind Supporters* are: 1) Beaver Excavating, 2) City of Canton, 3) Hilscher-Clarke Electric, 4) Reliable Ready Mix, and 5) Whitacre Engineering.

“I was drawn to **The NFL Draft** (moment) because it demonstrated the collaboration between the business and the art of football.” said Folwell. “For this reason, I was compelled to conceptually portray the team owner in a suit as the center on the team, building the roster of players around him.”

To football aficionados, the center in Folwell’s creation is Bert Bell, co-founder and owner of the Philadelphia Eagles and Commissioner of the NFL from 1946 – 1959. It was Bell’s idea to equalize the playing field in 1936 by creating the first college player draft, where professional teams would

select college players in inverse order, based on how they finished the prior season, thus changing the future of clubs overnight. The action resulted in Bell's famous quote, "On any given Sunday, any team can beat any other team."

To personify both the man and the moment, Folwell has sculpted five 7-ft tall offensive line players cast in bronze. She describes **The NFL DRAFT** as "five, big, intimidating football players that are angular, hunched over, waiting for the snap to take place," adding that she enjoys working on pieces that convey intense energy.

Folwell channels her own intense energy through a very intricate process called lost-wax casting in which a duplicate metal sculpture is cast from an original and then personally hand-crafted into a clay model. She estimates that the original model took approximately 200 hours to create, with the finished work taking six months to finish.

The game plan is to unveil **The NFL Draft** in August 2015 during this year's Pro Football Hall of Fame activities in Canton, Ohio.

About Gail Folwell: As an artist and an athlete, Gail Folwell understands the human form and the flow and structure of energy and movement. She worked on large scale sports-themed projects ranging from \$70,000 - \$500,000 and residing in museums, universities, city centers and resorts. The 2014 winner of the Sports Artist of the Year, as awarded by American Sport Art Museum and Archives, Gail and architect husband Michael Folwell, operate Folwell Studios in Boulder, Colorado.

In addition to her notable sculptures such as *Swimmer* at Bowling Green University in Ohio, *The Pitch* in Frisco Texas and *In the Peloton* at the Denver Museum of Modern Art, Folwell has spent the last several years on cabinet and hardware designs, manufactured by her firm, Handle with Care. In addition, she started a virtual greeting card store, iGIVEaSmile, for the purpose of funding schools worldwide.

Find out more about Gail Folwell, including up to date progress on The NFL Draft, at <http://www.folwellstudios.com/>

About ArtsinStark

We are a 45 year old private, non-profit organization that gives out grants, manages the Cultural Center, and runs the Annual Arts Campaign --- and much more (Canton Arts District, First Fridays, SmArts Program in the schools, 20/20 Vision, and the ELEVEN). More at www.ArtsinStark.com. Our annual budget of \$3 million comes entirely from the private sector. We receive no government support. What we don't earn, we raise each spring from individuals, companies, and foundations through the Annual Arts Campaign. In May 2015 the Campaign raised the highest amount in 45 years: \$1,775,000 --- to become the only united arts fund drive in America to ever make goal for 10 years in a row. (Over the last decade we have increased private sector giving to the arts by 85%.)

About the Pro Football Hall of Fame

Since opening in 1963, the Pro Football Hall of Fame has grown in both size and stature. It stands as a shining tribute to the men who have made professional football America's most popular sport, operating under a mission of

Honor the Heroes of the Game
Preserve its History
Promote its Values
Celebrate Excellence EVERYWHERE

Most recently, the Master Plan for Hall of Fame Village set forth a bold vision for the Pro Football Hall of Fame that will be transformational and impactful, expected to generate substantial level of new visitation, spending, income, employment, and tax revenues for local, state and regional areas. The total construction costs for HOF Village are estimated at \$476 million. The project is slated to start this summer with the first phase to be completed by 2019.

About The ELEVEN Selection Process

A national invitation, to create the first piece in the series, was extended to professional artists, living in the United States, who had credentials and ideas for creating a public art project for \$150,000. The Selection Committee's job is to select the best concept. It also has the right to reject all four concepts if it feels none satisfy all the criteria. The criteria for ranking the concepts are:

- **Does it truly capture the "Birth of the NFL" moment?**
- **Does it represent the highest quality art?**
- **Is it so amazing that visitors will want to see it whether they like football or not?**

About THE ELEVEN

The ELEVEN is a \$2.2 million, privately-funded, multi-year project of ArtsinStark and The Pro Football Hall of Fame in Canton, Ohio celebrating the greatest moments in professional football history, as determined in the book, Where Greatness Lives, published by Grand Central Publishing in 2012.

In the chapter, "The Eleven Greatest Moments," written by Pete Fierle, the many moments were narrowed by the criteria of assigning "enduring impact" to the extensive list suggested. Picking 11 moments is significant as it is the number of players on each side of the line of scrimmage.

These are the moments.

Birth of the NFL (1920). On September 17, representatives of the league's ten charter teams, including Jim Thorpe and George Halas, meet in the showroom of Canton Bulldogs owner Ralph Hay's Hupmobile dealership, and create the NFL.

Red Grange turns Pro (1925) The Chicago Bears sign college superstar halfback Harold "Red" Grange to become pro football's first big gate attraction.

The NFL Draft (1936). NFL Commissioner Bert Bell's idea of teams selecting college players by inverse order, based on how they finished the prior season, changes the future of clubs overnight.

Reintegration of Pro Football (1946). The Los Angeles Rams sign Woody Strode and Kenny Washington, the Cleveland Browns sign Marion Motely and Bill Willis, and the doors of professional football open for African Americans.

1958 NFL Championship Game. In what has been called in the "Greatest Game Ever Played," Johnny Unitas and the Baltimore Colts come back to beat the New York Giants in first "sudden death" NFL championship

Formation of the American Football League (1959). The AFL is formed and for ten seasons expands into new markets, creates opportunities, and brings tremendous innovation to the game.

Pete Rozelle named NFL Commissioner (1960). Rozelle begins his 29-year career during which he makes pro football America's most popular sport, gets the first league-wide TV contract, negotiates the NFL/AFL merger --- and transforms the Super Bowl into international extravaganza.

AFL/NFL Merger (1966). The costly battle between two rival leagues for players and markets ends with the June 8, 1966 announcement of the AFL-NFL merger.

The Ice Bowl (1967). In frigid conditions at Lambeau Field on New Year's Eve, Bart Starr and the Green Bay Packers beat the Dallas Cowboys 21 - 17, cementing the legacy of coach Vince Lombardi and the 1960 Green Bay Packers.

Super Bowl III (1968). Joe Namath, star quarterback of the AFL's New York Jets, predicts victory over the NFL's heavily favored Baltimore Colts --- and in one of the greatest upsets in sports history --- does it 16 - 7.

Monday Night Football (1970). The phenomenal success of NFL games telecast during prime time on a weeknight begins on September 21, 1970, when the Cleveland Browns face the New York Jets in ABC-TV's *Monday Night Football*