

Losing Is a Work of 'Art': Professional Football and the Civic Promoter in Cleveland¹

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Nearly two decades ago, Stephen Hardy called for a heightened study of sports entrepreneurs and investors. Scholars were encouraged to investigate the roles of these individuals within product development and the types of individual organisations and networks of organisations that they created. The application of this framework has generated relatively little outside of studies specific to entrepreneurial involvement in the business of sports. These examinations of organisations and networks overwhelmingly focus on league structures and policies, stadium construction, and franchise relocation. Missing from this body of work are the multiple business opportunities for the entrepreneur outside of the sports realm that are made available through the entrepreneur's connection to sport. Hardy dubs these individuals commercial promoters and points to their motivation: 'civic duty, egotism, and a love of sport'.² Not surprisingly for men of business, their use of sport translated into a 'means to personal or corporate profit'. During his years as owner of the National Football League's (NFL) Cleveland Browns, Arthur Modell incorporated the motivations and the drive for personal profit that connote the commercial promoter.³

This paper examines Art Modell's tenure as Browns' owner between 1961 and 1978, with a special focus on the 1970s, and focuses on the methods by which he asserted himself as a commercial promoter. Modell indeed took full advantage of his position as majority owner of the Browns to publicly promote civic leadership and charity and to privately search for greater profit while catering to his ego. Specifically, three interconnected themes emerge that establish the pattern of control he sought, the motivation behind his actions, and elaborate on how he proceeded without question or concern from Cleveland's media and civic elite. First, Modell established himself as the identity of the Cleveland Browns through both his own conscious efforts and circumstance. Next, he shed his image as an 'outsider' or 'carpetbagger', largely due to his connection to the Browns and became one of Cleveland's most active and respected civic leaders. Finally, Modell used his new image to branch out his business efforts into non-sport related ventures.

Throughout this process Modell courted and gained favour with Cleveland's booster press, which enabled him to proceed with support and the image of a local hero. The Browns struggled through much of this period, but sport had seemingly become a means to an end as Modell looked to broaden his

either. Regardless of the credibility of this nostalgic account, there was little chance that the growing rift between the two men could be resolved. Many local scribes felt that something would give, but no one knew when this would happen. One man would have to go. On January 9, 1963 Modell informed Brown that he would have to step down as head coach and general manager. While various reasons circulated as to why Modell fired Brown (including rumors of an impending players revolt and a belief that the game had passed Brown by), Brown insists that the foremost reason was Modell's ego. According to Brown, Modell told him, 'This team can never fully be mine as long as you are here because whenever anyone thinks of the Cleveland Browns, they think of you. Every time I come to the stadium, I feel that I am invading your domain, and from now on there can only be one dominant image'.⁷ This by no means suggests that other factors were not at play or valid in the firing of Paul Brown. Evidence found in comments from players and reporters at this time reveals that several factors were possible. Yet the pattern that emerges after Brown's departure clearly points to a desire on Modell's part to become the franchise's public image. Modell simply used his ownership power to propel this desire closer to reality.⁸

Modell's timing in firing Brown could not have been better in terms of public relations. Cleveland was in the midst of its longest newspaper strike, rendering both daily papers, the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* and the *Cleveland Press*, unable to inform the team's rabid fans of the fate of their beloved coach. The booster press, however, could not and would not be kept silent on such a large news item, and subsequently united to produce a small publication detailing the firing and varied reactions. Titled *Paul Brown: The Play He Didn't Call* and selling for twenty-five cents, the sports booklet provided the booster press with a schizophrenic voice on the firing when all other major print media in the city had been rendered silent. Sports editors, beat writers and columnists alike agreed that a new era of Cleveland football was to emerge, even if they could not decide on who was at fault or if there was fault to be placed for the old era's demise. Again, hints that a power play was at or near the centre of the Brown-Modell saga emerged. Frank Gibbons of the *Press* noted that Paul Brown had 'carved a very large chunk of football marble' for Cleveland during his coaching tenure. But Brown did not want or appreciate Modell's presence in football decisions and communications between the two suffered as a result. 'The only way that Modell could break into the inner sanctum', he continued, 'was to fire the stern guard at the gate...Brown'. According to Gibbons, this provided Modell with his chance to become a larger part of the team and 'carve his own piece of marble'.⁹ Others, such as the *Plain Dealer's* Hal Lebovitz, commended Modell for his decision. 'It took courage to fire Paul Brown', Lebovitz wrote.¹⁰ Others chimed in with varying opinions from various angles, but the one constant from the booster press was the acknowledgement that a new boss was in charge.¹¹

While Modell's relationship with Paul Brown had been cantankerous from the start, the same could not be said regarding the other prominent Brown on the team. Jim Brown, the team's star running back, was the apple of Modell's marketing eye. Several sources cited Jim Brown's displeasure with Paul Brown and his system as one of the primary forces behind the coach's firing. He was as confident as he was talented and did not back down from Paul Brown the way most of the players had done during the coach's tenure. It is possible that the shift in control and image from Paul Brown to Jim Brown resulted from the change in personalities on the Browns' roster over the years. Paul Brown's original teams were made up of men who had served in WWII and were well beyond their college years by the time they joined the pro-football ranks. Furthermore, they were more accepting of their coach's brand of team discipline because of their wartime experiences. Jim Brown's emergence as a team leader and public representative of Browns' football coincided with a new generation of football players with whom Paul Brown had problems relating. These athletes benefited from the advancements in pro football made by their predecessors, while also coming to grips with the cultural tensions of the Civil Rights movement and the growing American presence in Vietnam. Jim Brown best represented the new athlete in Cleveland. The outspoken running back's happiness and future with the team were of concern for Modell. One rumour, as reported in *Sports Illustrated*, hinted that Modell suspected that Paul Brown had a Jim Brown for Johnny Unitas trade in the works. Modell did not want to lose his star player. Certainly Jim Brown's superstar status in the league and among Cleveland's football fans was not lost on Modell. Jim Brown was the owner's self-proclaimed 'senior partner'. Brown was the team's most marketable commodity, and soon replaced Paul Brown as the public face and dominant personality on the team.¹²

But Jim Brown was not simply a football player. By 1966 he began to question his future in football as his interests shifted to his acting career and his work with the Negro Industrial and Economic Union, of which he was chair of the board. As Brown's interests outside football diversified, they threatened to take away more and more of his time from football. Modell accommodated Brown with a separate set of rules befitting a superstar, but even these rules had limits. When it became apparent that Brown would not arrive for the start of the 1966 training camp, Modell drew a line in the sand. Modell, although admitting the complexity of the movie industry, announced that Jim Brown would be suspended without pay if he missed the start of training camp. Brown, in London, England filming *The Dirty Dozen*, responded less than a month later in a letter to Modell, in which he announced his intentions to retire. Brown also intimated that he took offence to Modell's use of pressure tactics through the media. 'I was very sorry to see you make the statements that you did', penned Brown, 'because it was not a victory for you or I but for the newspaper men'.¹³ Brown had earlier hinted that he would retire from football after the 1966

season, but the pomp and circumstance brought on by Modell's press release precipitated this new plan of action. It would be unfair to suggest that Modell pushed the best player on his team, not to mention the most marketable athlete, into retirement in a gesture of power. Still, his ultimatum left the Browns without a strong face or identity.¹⁴

Without either its greatest player or most successful coach, the Cleveland Browns found itself lacking a dominant figure for the first time. The Browns' identity was truly up for grabs. In 1971 Nick Skorich was hired as the third head coach in the history of the Cleveland Browns. *Cleveland Magazine*, in an article examining the indistinctive Skorich, noted that he was the first 'mere mortal' to coach the Browns. Paul Brown, the team's legendary coach, was compared to an 'Olympian God of War', while Blanton Collier, his successor, was seen as both a teacher and an intellectual. As to why one of the NFL's most storied franchises would hire a relative no-name, the author directed his readers to look no further than to team majority owner Arthur Modell. Personalities were at play; Modell wanted someone who would not make waves within the organisation; and Skorich knew who was boss. The article states, 'In Cleveland Modell – and nobody but Modell – owns the Browns'.¹⁵

The Nick Skorich experiment failed after four seasons. The Browns made the playoffs in his first two years (1971, 1972), but then slipped into a state of disarray. In 1974 the team won four games and lost ten; only the second losing season in franchise history. Modell next turned to another Browns assistant coach, Forrest Gregg, and signed him to a three-year contract. Finding coaches within the Browns' family had been successful with Collier and Skorich, at least initially. This left Modell with high hopes for the team's revival. Gregg, however, brought with him the influences of his former Green Bay Packers coach, Vince Lombardi, and proved to be an outspoken taskmaster. His grating style did not appeal to the players, and the on-field results bore the proof as his teams went 3-11, 9-5, and 6-8 in his three seasons as coach. Perhaps more importantly, game attendance had been on the decline since 1971 and reached a new low in 1975 when it dropped below 400,000 fans for the first time under Modell's ownership. The lack of success dissuaded many fans from attending Municipal Stadium on Sunday afternoons. The stability of the organisation rested squarely on Modell's shoulders, as he himself admitted in several interviews during the mid-70s. One could argue that the team began its collapse once the players and coaches put into place by Paul Brown had left and Modell, the former student of the game who became the *de facto* general manager, took over much of the operations of the Browns. His coaches and scouts, Modell argued, were never overruled to make any personnel decisions. Still, perhaps unnecessarily using the prerogatives of ownership and diplomatically keeping an awareness of his investment, he kept his finger on the team's pulse. Modell proclaimed that he wanted answers for every move, but only in terms of reasoning, not accountability.¹⁶

Paul Brown had once been the individual whom the booster press turned to in their quest for good copy and inside information. The low-profile coaches of the 1970s did not carry with them the same credentials or success. They were employees instead of power brokers. Modell was now the face and force of the Browns and was duly thrust into the hot seat. The booster press wondered aloud to the owner about the direction the city's football team was heading, but did not criticise him for the most part. Modell obliged them with projections of a return to glory and promises of impending changes if failure persisted. Regardless of the situation, it was clear in many a press clipping that the Browns franchise was in the hands of Modell. Upon hiring Gregg before the 1975 season, Modell announced that he would 'spend more time in camp than in recent years', and, whenever possible, that he would be 'at Forrest's side to help'. After a 1977 loss to the Los Angeles Rams, Modell was quoted in local sports pages regarding his dissatisfaction with team play. He promised to reevaluate all facets of the team and changes when the season ended, saying, 'I will call in everyone from top to bottom'. Gregg felt Modell was intruding and in the process undermined the coach's authority and team confidence. Following a thrashing by the San Diego Chargers a week later, Gregg exploded to the local press, claiming that Modell's comments affected him throughout the week. No phony 'vote of confidence' followed, and Gregg was fired before the season was completed. While the coach bore the brunt of organisational and public blame, some in the media felt the heat for the franchise's problems should be dispersed. One Press columnist overtly stated, 'Beginning with Art Modell, the entire bunch of routiners that makes up the club must face the responsibility for an organization that is listless, boring and I'm afraid rather hopeless'.¹⁷ Couple this with headlines stating, 'Modell: "We'll find the answer"', 'Does Modell eat his words?' and '"We need help" says Modell', and an examination on the 'State of Modell' in the *Plain Dealer*, and it was clear that Modell had become the 'player owner' Paul Brown had feared.¹⁸

Throughout 1970s Art Modell was by far the most prominent personality linked to the Browns. There was no high-profile coach roaming the sidelines, and no superstar running back bursting out of the backfield and into the endzone. Modell had risen to the forefront of the franchise, and was the first person the booster press turned to when it wanted an update on the state of the Browns. According to some, this was just the way he wanted it. '[Modell] wanted to be the Browns', stated an unnamed employee, 'and he wanted his name to be associated with the Browns and his name only'. Modell's name was then linked to a struggling franchise that left its fans wanting. For better or for worse, the Browns' new direction was the direct responsibility of their owner.¹⁹

The 'Drummer Who Didn't Leave Town'

Author David Harris surmised that 'Art Modell [circa 1974] was the Browns, the Browns were Cleveland, and Art Modell played the role to the hilt'.²⁰ The young owner took his association with the Browns and used it to its fullest capacity in Cleveland. One cannot underestimate the value of the Browns. 'The Browns are more than the town's professional football team', argued journalist Doug Clarke. 'They are an institution...the Browns are no less than the city's most important ego-trip'.²¹ Throughout most of the 1970s, Modell parlayed his football ownership into a series of widely applauded outside ventures, none of which would have been possible had he not overcome the suspicions and distrust surrounding him to become the epitome of a civic booster.

Modell came to Cleveland an outsider, and to make matters worse a native New Yorker. If Cleveland's sports past had proven nothing else, it proved the existence of an inferiority complex when Cleveland came up against New York. The Browns, the one team able to consistently raise Cleveland to an elite level with a proven track record against a New York squad, was sold to an advertising executive from Brooklyn. The natives were restless. Reportedly Modell feared the repercussions from three possible public perceptions: he was an advertising man, he was from New York and he was Jewish. Clevelanders cautiously sized-up the new owner and stereotyping was surely at play. Some judgments equated that perceptions of Modell would translate into the demise of a team said to represent Cleveland's blue-collar determination. 'When I came [to Cleveland]', Modell once said, 'it was said that I was a "Madison Avenue Hustler" and a "Carpetbagger", who was going to strip the Browns and beat it out of town'.²² But the team soon became Modell's meal-ticket to public approval. The Browns defeated not only their New York rivals, but the majority of the league on a consistent basis as well during Modell's first decade in Cleveland. 'Winning changes everything', Modell boasted after the Browns defeated the Baltimore Colts to win the 1964 NFL Championship, his lone championship in Cleveland.²³ But success alone would not and did not foster an unconditional acceptance of the team's owner. Modell had to actively overcome in many ways the stigma of being an outsider on his way to becoming Cleveland's favorite 'adopted' son.²⁴

Modell's greatest ally in creating a civic-friendly, public image was the local booster press. His friendly relationships with members of the media, including television, certainly precipitated multiple public-relations opportunities and the framing of these opportunities in the greatest possible light. Dino Lucarelli, a former public relations staff member for Modell's Browns, argues that Art was great with the media and he was great for the city of Cleveland. 'Oh, the media loved him'.²⁵ At worst the press criticised Modell with kid gloves, arguing that his brashness came from his football inexperience and his actions were born of the best of intentions. They would often add that he was still learning his trade. On the whole, however, the media praised

Modell as a sports owner, promoter and civic leader. Prior to the 1975 season, the *Plain Dealer's* Hal Lebovitz praised Modell for being just such a person. 'We submit to you that Modell already has done more for downtown than any single individual, or corporation, in Cleveland', he stated. He later lauded Modell's efforts, which 'reveal[ed] what an individual with courage and ability' can do.²⁶ Through interviews, editorials, and columns, the booster press helped diminish Modell's 'otherness', and posit him for civic inclusion. Their motives were seldom questioned, and the benefit of the doubt was given to the Browns owner until he proved otherwise. Modell wisely picked and chose his moments to optimise both headlines and profits, and the booster press obliged him with glowing affirmations.²⁷

The 1970s produced the worst football in the Browns' franchise history, but the booster press remained supportive of the team and Modell. Modell's relationship with members of the media went beyond the scenario of the newsmaker and the reporter, and on more than one occasion members of Cleveland's print media came to his aid when public scrutiny heightened. In 1969 Clevelanders awoke to headlines announcing that the Browns would move from the NFL into the new American Football Conference (consisting of former AFL franchises) for the 1970 season. Modell, residing in a New York City hospital as he recovered from an ulcer attack, told reporters that he made the move for the benefit of the Browns and the strength of professional football. The Pittsburgh Steelers and Baltimore Colts joined the Browns in the move, and Modell called their presence essential for both the competitive balance of the AFC as well as making the transition desirable for Cleveland. Many members of the media and some fans defended the move, arguing that the Browns would be a powerhouse for years to come in the presumed weaker AFC. Surprisingly, the only mention of financial compensation on the first day of coverage came from the Associated Press's report. Modell and the booster press did not address the issue until the second day of coverage, and then only in a secondary manner. Modell mentioned in passing that the NFL would pay each of the moving franchises from two to three million dollars in compensation, but quickly added that it was not a primary concern. Browns beat writer Chuck Heaton also gave only brief mention to the financial compensation the Browns were receiving. He justified it as compensation for the inevitable lost income the Browns would lose on road games against 'weaker teams'. A *Plain Dealer* editorial added another justification to the mix: a means of easing the team's transition in the minds of Browns fans.²⁸

But while Modell and the local media kept a positive spin on the move and the cash payoff, many fans and some outside media saw things differently. Many fans voiced their concerns in letters to the sports editor of the *Plain Dealer*. These letters complained of Modell's disregard for tradition and loyalty (calling to mind his 'outsider' status once again) and the supposedly diminished quality of play in the AFC, and some even indicated threats of terminating

season tickets. Among the letters to the editor that followed the move, only one directly attacked the financial aspect of the move, saying 'it's great for [Modell]. He's got his millions for transferring, so it's full speed forward and damn the fans'.²⁹ While the local media would not step forward and address the financial compensation more fully, Shirley Povich of the *Washington Post* did. In an article coinciding with a preseason game between the Browns and Washington Redskins, Povich commented on Cleveland's shift to the AFC. The Browns, he argues, were 'persuaded' by the three million dollars to join the new league. 'The chance to fondle \$3 million had a bearing on Modell's decision', he states, but counters that the Browns' owner also had to have company in the move (Steelers and Colts) and be able to name the other teams in his new AFC division. Underlying his article and directly addressing the financial compensation for moving was arguably a subtle hint that Modell needed the money more than he was letting on. Povich said the move was a product of Modell's brightness and venturesome nature, but then quickly notes he had personally borrowed \$2.5 million to purchase the Browns in 1961, pledged 'all he owned' to the banks, and paid Paul Brown's \$82,500 salary for six years after firing the former coach.³⁰ Money most definitely seemed to be an issue. Modell's financial transactions and those he initiated through the Browns often alluded to personal and organisation debt and subsequent means to becoming financially solvent again. The booster press ignored this angle and stayed true to the argument that Modell made the move simply because it would be 'great for football'.³¹

While the upbeat coverage seemed nothing more than the usual pattern of media optimism, some questioned the journalistic integrity of the situation. Through the Browns radio and television broadcasts, Modell employed several journalists and thus had direct connections to their respective media outlets. With others, the connections resulted from past employment and friendship. In 1978 the umbrella of Modell's influence stretched to great lengths. Former Browns wide receiver Paul Warfield was a sportscaster for Channel 3 (Cleveland's NBC affiliate), Channel 8 (CBS affiliate) sportscaster Jim Mueller was the colour man for the Browns' radio broadcasts on WHK, and Gib Shanley from Channel 5 (ABC affiliate) did play-by-play for radio broadcasts and was a co-owner of WJW radio with Modell. While the qualification of each man for his respective job was not in question, an assurance of objectivity in reporting was in doubt. *Press* columnist Doug Clarke pointed out the danger of having 'three major TV stations, along with two radio stations, coming perilously close to residing in the hip pocket of the Cleveland Browns'. He also noted that in all of the praise Modell received during the ceremonies, no one ever mentioned the financial compensation he received when talking about his 'philanthropic' move of the Browns to the AFC to strengthen professional football.³² His cautionary column was not lost on those he named or his own editors at the *Press*. Modell called Clarke's column an example of yellow

journalism in a letter sent to the journalist and his editors. Shanley took a moment during a nightly sportscast to accuse Clarke of seeking publicity. According to free-lance writer Roldo Bartimole, Clarke was confronted by *Press* managing editor Bob Sullivan who complained about the reaction to the article. Clarke reportedly responded, 'What am I supposed to do, go after the little guys and leave the big guys alone?' The order then came down that one of the *Press's* top four editors would review all of Clarke's future articles.³³

Bartimole further pointed out the unhealthy relationship Modell had with sportswriters and editors; leaving them tickets for games and sending them gifts at the holidays. These gifts were not so much bribes as they were symbols of the problem at hand. Bartimole asserted that censorship was the issue and that editors made rules so that 'certain business people [were] off limits to criticism'.³⁴ Former Browns defensive back Bernie Parrish addressed this same problem seven years earlier in *They Call it a Game*. Noting that *Plain Dealer* editor Thomas Vail and other press VIPs were frequent guests of Art Modell at the Municipal Stadium's Wigwam Club, Parrish warned of the possible financial and political relationships that tended to be overlooked in such circumstances. If a sportswriter happened to offend an owner in a column, the implications would be far-reaching. Trust and inside information would cease with the given club specifically, and possibly throughout the rest of the given league as well as all professional sports in general. The relationship between Modell and the press was arguably unhealthy along ethical lines; however, news coverage of Modell would continue to be kind and void of serious scrutiny with friends and protectors in place.³⁵

Modell's biggest tool for gaining favour in Cleveland was his loudly proclaimed loyalty to his new hometown and the constant quest for the betterment of its conditions and imagery. For much of the 1970s, Modell made just as many headlines through his efforts to promote the city as he did with the Browns. Given the state of urban decline Cleveland was experiencing, civic promotion was no easy task. The usual suspects in urban decline, crime, pollution, poverty, and suburban flight, debased the foundation of the central city and traditional neighbourhoods. 'Overall, a morbid tone pervaded the analysis of [Cleveland]', argued Jon Teaford. '[It] appeared to be hitting bottom, largely unaffected by attempts to buoy [its] fortunes'.³⁶ In fact, between 1960 and 1970 Cleveland had lost fourteen per cent of its population, and by the early 1970s the city was losing roughly twenty thousand residents a year. Even the once flourishing suburbs that had absorbed Cleveland's migrants found themselves losing population in the 1970s. Cleveland evolved into a less viable economic area where retail sales dropped 26 per cent between 1950 and 1970.³⁷ The Greater Cleveland Growth Association (GCGA) entered into a series of publicity campaigns designed to reinstate a sense of confidence within Clevelanders as well as inspire businesses and conventions to return to the city. One of the prominent members of the GCGA was none other than Art Modell.

He saw a connection between the overall state of Cleveland and the perception and expectation placed upon the city's professional sports team. In a *Plain Dealer* interview, he commented:

There's a negativism in Cleveland for reasons other than sports. There have been nothing but problems in our town. I can't help but feel that the political and financial and other problems do have a relationship to the sporting scene. And sports hasn't helped erase the negativism . . . the fans who look for escape through sports have not been accommodated.³⁸

Modell continued to work with the GCGA on their efforts to create a positive image for Cleveland, and by 1978 he was co-chair of the 'New Cleveland' campaign.

Modell's public face and the image of a civic leader that had been crafted around him paid off in public and civic accolades despite the hardships surrounding the Browns through much of the 1970s. Away from the game of football, Modell strove to showcase his commitment to Cleveland, his new home, in a variety of ways. This included promotion of the city through sports and by way of civic involvement. In the late 1960s, when Cleveland had no professional basketball franchise, Modell (through the Cleveland Browns) worked with the *Plain Dealer* to bring the Cincinnati Royals to the Cleveland Arena for several games a season. Sportswriters credited Modell, through this gesture, as one of the key figures responsible for the NBA's eventual arrival in Cleveland. In 1975 Modell was named grand jury foreman, and the decision was immediately praised in the local press. One editorial called the decision a 'topflight choice' and further stated that, 'Modell has been the administrative business mind and the civic view of this community'.³⁹ Modell served his time and was praised for the sincerity he showed in approaching the position. He was commended in the press for championing the role of the grand jury foreman when the position's value was questioned, and for seeking the implementation of laws that would aid crime victims. Art Modell had become, or was framed as, a man for the people.⁴⁰

His popularity further became evident in 1977 when he was linked to Ohio Governor James Rhodes. The press indicated that for years Modell's friends and colleagues urged him to cash in on his good name and popularity by running for mayor of Cleveland. Modell had always declined. Now the Browns' owner was linked to a stage bigger than professional sports. In March 1977 both the *Press* and *Plain Dealer* reported that Modell was seriously considering joining Rhodes as a candidate for Lieutenant Governor on the GOP slate for the next election. The governor was receptive to the idea by all accounts. Modell himself stated that he was beginning to lose interest in professional football given the 'legal entanglements' facing the NFL at that

time. A second factor was that Rhodes, if elected, would be serving his final term. This would put Modell in the enviable position of front-runner for the subsequent gubernatorial race. As ideal a match as this might have seemed, several roadblocks emerged. First, the *Plain Dealer* revealed that Modell had contributed \$1,000 to the Democratic candidate opposing Rhodes for governor in the previous elections. Modell quickly countered with the assurance that he had contributed to various Democratic and GOP candidates, including Rhodes, over the years. Second, Modell's conditions for candidacy revealed an unrealistic desire on his part for control over his fate. A *Press* report indicated that Modell would run only if the GOP cleared the field for him by presenting no opponents in the primaries and by issuing a strong public endorsement. Time passed without confirmation of either of Modell's desired scenarios coming to fruition. By May, any hint of Modell running for Lt. Governor was put to rest. Modell then announced that he was out of politics. Some hinted that Modell opted to stick with professional football, in spite of the legal entanglements it was undergoing, after realising the responsibilities of the position. Another possibility, which will be discussed in more detail later, was that Modell went along with the rumour in order to parlay the publicity surrounding his possible political entry into greater public favour. In turn, Modell could present himself in an even greater civic light as he pursued the privatisation of Cleveland's Public Hall, much as he had done with Municipal Stadium. Whatever the truth, the credence given to Modell's political potential again confirmed the growing acceptance he had nurtured.⁴¹

The field of candidates capable of carrying the mantle of Cleveland's pride was thin in the 1970s. Modell, the outsider, had made tremendous strides in separating himself from this small group of contenders. In a case of irony, however, Modell's biggest challenge as a promoter of professional sports and a steward of civic pride came from a Cleveland native. Nick Mileti burst onto Cleveland's sports entrepreneurial scene in 1968, yet he did not initially seem like much of a challenge to Modell. After all, Modell owned the storied Browns of the NFL while Mileti possessed the decrepit Cleveland Arena and the American Hockey League's Cleveland Barons. Within four years, however, the Cleveland native had added the Cavaliers of the NBA, the Crusaders of the World Hockey Association and Major League Baseball's Indians to his stable of professional teams. Mileti never missed an opportunity to frame his sports and entertainment investments as fitting tributes to the grandeur of Cleveland, playing up the notion of being Cleveland's 'favorite son'. Professional sport was his means, and fame, fortune and ego were his end. Modell, however, did not limit himself to the world of professional sports. The NFL's policy against cross-ownership in professional sports prevented him in part from becoming financially involved with a couple franchise related opportunities, such as investing in the Indians or an expansion hockey franchise, so Modell pursued opportunities in related areas. His additional business ventures in Cleveland,

while not making the headlines of Mileti's growing empire, kept his name in the press and furthered the notion of civic commitment he cultivated. When Mileti built his Coliseum outside of Cleveland, consequently taking professional hockey and basketball away from the city, Modell's public commitment to keep the Browns downtown drew praise. Years later it would be revealed that Modell had indeed privately weighed his options regarding Municipal Stadium as well as possibilities for building a new one elsewhere. Yet in the aftermath of Mileti's announcement it was Modell's commitment to Cleveland that the booster press extolled. In accordance, the Greater Cleveland Growth Association dubbed the Browns owner as 'The Drummer Who Didn't Leave Town' in their monthly magazine. According to the article, '[Modell was] an unblushing partisan of Cleveland, sounding like a brash, tub-thumping publicity man when asked about his adopted city'. Surpassing the 'favorite son' was a fine feather in the cap of the 'adopted son'.⁴²

The aforementioned NFL rule disallowing owners to have cross-ownership of franchises in other professional leagues kept Modell from investing in Cleveland's baseball franchise, but it did not keep him from becoming involved with the club. And again, Modell's every action was posited as a gesture of civic-minded responsibility and concern by the booster press. In 1972, Mileti headed a syndicate that purchased the Indians, thereby keeping the franchise from inevitably moving to New Orleans. Five years later the team was still in Cleveland but was not financially solvent. Between 1972 and 1976 the Indians lost a reported \$4.5 million and the franchise found itself desperately trying to liquidate a \$5.5 million bank loan. Both the *Press* and *Plain Dealer* announced in April 1977 that Modell would offer his services to the Indians, but only after receiving permission and guidelines for involvement from NFL commissioner Pete Rozelle. 'I want to make it clear that this effort on my part is still a conjectural thing', asserted Modell. 'But I am definitely interested in helping stabilize the Indians financially or any other way I can'.⁴³ Indians stockholders Dudley Blossom, Bruce Fine, and Ted Stepan publicly welcomed Modell's involvement. Referring to the franchise's bank loan, Fine told the *Press*, 'We're not an ailing franchise. But, we can use some help'. Rozelle informed Modell that he could not directly invest in the Indians, but other doors of involvement remained open.⁴⁴

Not everyone, however, believed Modell's motives for involvement with the Indians were pure. Two problematic fronts emerged: public skepticism from within Cleveland and fraternal discord from a fellow NFL owner. First, a feeling surfaced in some parts of Cleveland that Modell was seeking involvement in the Indians only to secure the financial stability of a Stadium tenant. Such an accusation failed to paint the picture of Modell as Cleveland's civic-minded benefactor. Instead, it focused on his role as Municipal Stadium's operator and the Indians' *de facto* landlord. Truly, his investment in Municipal Stadium could not afford the loss of 81 event dates if the Indians left

Cleveland. But this angle was downplayed by the booster press. 'It must be said that Modell goes out of his way to aid other civic ventures in trouble', argued Lebovitz. 'So his effort to help the Indians can't be labeled as entirely selfish. His track record on working to revitalize the city merits high praise'.⁴⁵ Modell portrayed himself as a concerned individual ready to work with Indians management as a consultant, a member or the team board or not at all if desired. The self-proclaimed 'catalyst' used his influence to put together a new ownership syndicate headed by trucking magnate F.J. 'Steve' O'Neill. The group purchased the club for eleven million dollars, of which \$5.5 million was earmarked for the team's bank loans, and Art Modell found himself a member of the Indians Board of Directors.⁴⁶

Modell was able to overcome this first public relations problem, but a second problem was lingering from within professional football's fraternity of owners. Oakland Raiders' owner Al Davis found Modell's involvement with the Indians an example of the NFL's hypocrisy in regards to cross-ownership. Davis objected to Modell's seat on the Indians' Board, especially in light of the NFL's stance against Lamar Hunt's ten per cent absentee ownership in the Chicago Bulls of the NBA. Underlying this argument was an existing antagonism between Davis and Rozelle. Modell's friendship with Rozelle and the 'gray' nature of his involvement with a professional baseball team made him a likely target for Davis. Rozelle and Modell argued that the Browns owner's role came from an act of civic mindedness and possessed no financial investment. Modell admitted that his only reason for getting involved with the Indians was because of the Cleveland Stadium Corp. Without the Indians, he proclaimed, it was very likely that the Stadium Corp. would have gone bankrupt and he himself would have subsequently gone bankrupt, but Davis remained unconvinced that a double-standard did not exist. To avoid further scrutiny and possible divisiveness, Modell promised his fellow owners that he would not run for reelection to the Indian's board in 1978. While Modell was able to come out of this squabble unscathed in the public eye, he had revealed in the process of justifying his involvement with Indians that his motives were far less driven by civic responsibility than the booster press indicated.⁴⁷

Modell's accomplishments and the accolades showered upon him by the booster press finally merged in a public forum. The Sports Media Association of Cleveland and Ohio chose to honour Modell along with the areas top athletes in February 1978. The night provided a stage for the culmination of Modell's civic image. With his friend Commissioner Rozelle in attendance as a guest speaker, Modell highlighted the night as the recipient of the 'Pride of Cleveland' award. Eighteen years after arriving from New York City, Modell had validation that he was no longer viewed a carpetbagger. After Rozelle praised the Browns' owner for his commitment to the betterment of the NFL, the microphone was turned over to Modell. 'Cleveland is more than buildings', he commented. 'It is made up of people, good people. It is my home and I hope

that this is where my sons will make their home'.⁴⁸ The booster press did not fail to provide their tribute to Modell in their coverage of the event. 'Modell is a man who smiles a lot and this is not a façade', wrote Browns beat writer Chuck Heaton. 'Sure, he gets angry on occasions . . . even with sportswriters . . . but this passes quickly and is a good excuse to lift a drink or two'.⁴⁹ Aside from the occasional letter of complaint regarding rising ticket prices or losing records, Art Modell was at the pinnacle of popularity in Cleveland. He proudly banged the drum for Cleveland, and widely garnered the support of the community in the process. Colleagues still contend that, 'He did a lot of things for this community that he'll never get credit for'.⁵⁰ Having the booster press's support added to the sparkling civic image that emerged throughout the 1970s. With these facets in place, Modell had broadened his business ventures without scrutiny. Reeking of civic commitment and responsibility, however, his moves often appeared more civic-minded than they were. As the football owner branched out into promoting, investing, and consulting a troubling reality emerged away from the headlines.

Translating Reputation into Dollars and Cents

Modell's badge of civic commitment translated into more than public accolades in the 1970s. It also created opportunities for him. The former New York 'hustler' had become a voice of civic responsibility and was given the respect fitting his revered status by civic leaders, the booster press, and the public. In accordance, Modell was also given the benefit of the doubt as he began to broaden his business ventures. Modell merged the imagery surrounding professional sport and civic commitment into a series of both desired and achieved investments as will be explored. Behind the public façade, these investments revealed Modell as the entrepreneur looking to use sport and civic pride for personal profit. He had indeed cemented his presence as a commercial promoter who possessed tremendous public clout. As the decade ran its course, Modell found himself with multiple opportunities for expanding his business along a chosen 'promotional' path. David Harris pointed out that for Modell, 'reputation, and the standing which accompanied it', translated into hard cash. Cleveland Municipal Stadium, the home of his Browns, provided the first and foremost opportunity for 'dollars and cents'.⁵¹

Municipal Stadium was the final piece of a puzzle that was Cleveland's Group Plan of 1903, but the project remained incomplete into the late 1920s. While the northern border of the proposed land tract had originally been set aside for the construction of a large railway passenger station that would usher visitors into the growing metropolis, no station was constructed. City Manager William Hopkins eventually proposed the construction of a stadium. Plans for the publicly funded stadium were approved by city politicians, and the issue went before Cleveland voters in November 1928. Receiving roughly sixty per cent of the total vote, the Stadium Bond issue passed.⁵²

Municipal Stadium's completion in 1931 was perceived as a step forward for Cleveland's future ambitions. The rapid growth of the city in the first three decades of the twentieth century saw the Lake Erie port develop into a major American metropolis. By the time of Municipal Stadium's construction, Cleveland was the fifth largest city and third largest metropolitan area in the United States. The Stadium was part of a larger plan to propel Cleveland to positions of regional and national grandeur. The economic and cultural influence Cleveland held during the Roaring Twenties cultivated ideas of challenging Chicago as the major centre of the Great Lakes/Midwestern region. Furthermore, the possession of a 70,000 plus seat facility that could be used for baseball, football, soccer and boxing encouraged civic leaders to set their sights on New York City's claim as America's sports capital. The Great Depression put an end to these dreams regardless of their initial feasibility. The Stadium remained mostly dormant until the mid 1940s when the Browns began play in the All America Football Conference. By 1972, Cleveland found itself the landlord of an aging facility whose primary tenant, the Indians, had reached a home attendance figure of over one million fans only once since 1955. Furthermore, the Stadium was not making money, and the city fell further behind in its attempts to pay off the original city bonds issued for construction in 1928. In 1971 alone, Cleveland received \$579,490.92 in revenues but had expenses of \$756,449. When the leases for both the Indians and Browns came to an end in 1972, Modell began the process of privatising the Stadium.⁵³

Negotiations between Modell and the city over a new stadium lease began in earnest in 1970. Prior to this, the city had flirted with the idea of building a domed stadium downtown. Given the age of Municipal Stadium and the wear it had experienced due to nearly four decades of lakefront weather, two important issues came into play: the stadium's condition and the desire for a modern facility. In 1968 the city hired Charles Luckman Associates of New York City to examine the feasibility of building a domed stadium downtown or renovating Municipal Stadium to include a dome. At the time of the announcement, a model stadium was revealed to the media and civic leaders, prompting Modell to describe it as 'the best stadium in the entire country'.⁵⁴ By February 1970 when Luckman's final report was announced neither the proposed dome nor a renovated Municipal Stadium was economically feasible for Cleveland as projections estimated that a new stadium would cost the city \$60.5 million and run a deficit of three million annually. Putting a dome on the current stadium would have cost \$44 million and run yearly deficits of \$2.6 million. As the booster press lamented a lost opportunity for civic improvement and the waste of \$120,000 in government funds to pay for the study, Modell was resigned to putting a positive spin on the situation. Realising that Cleveland's financial conditions made such a large project all but impossible, Modell publicly stated that he and the Browns were happy at Municipal Stadium, though Cleveland's plight for new or renovated facilities was not over.⁵⁵

Putting his disappointment over the failed Luckman plan behind him, Modell moved forward with a new vision for Municipal Stadium. He was aided by Cleveland's frustration over the facility's financial hardships. Frank Duman, Director of the Stadium and Public Auditorium, told the *Plain Dealer* in 1970 that, 'The Stadium is a losing venture. We're always trying to reach the break-even point on operating costs'.⁵⁶ That same article hinted that Modell was looking into signing a long-term lease and taking over operations of the facility. In November 1969 Modell had initiated correspondence with Edward Baugh, Director of Public Properties, in which the latter was informed that, 'The Cleveland Browns would consider any reasonable approach to the stadium situation in order to provide vital capital improvements'.⁵⁷ By early 1971 little advancement had been made on the issue, due in part to tensions in negotiations (or the lack of negotiations as Modell hints in a 1971 letter to Baugh) between the Browns owner and Director of Finance, Philip M. Dearborn. In fact, Dearborn appears not to have trusted Modell completely. In a 1970 inter-office memo detailing Municipal Stadium cost figures provided to Modell, he told Baugh, 'This was the only information given to [Modell] and all that I think we should give at this time'.⁵⁸ The Browns lease was set to expire following the 1971 season, and the city was in dire need of downtown attractions. But with the interests of each party so mutually bound, surprisingly little was accomplished. Both Dearborn and Modell accused each other of negotiating through the press rather than with the other party. Modell rebuffed Dearborn's ongoing assertion that the city was losing money on the Stadium, and claimed that the Browns' presence had assured profits from the stadium. He requested access to the city's financial records to be certain Public Hall and its financial woes were not added into the Stadium equation. Dearborn himself had told Modell that many of the numbers he could provide were a 'somewhat arbitrary allocation of overhead and certain other costs' from both the stadium and auditorium, but Modell persisted in requesting specific figures. By 1971 Modell again turned to Baugh; urging immediate discussion through a veiled ultimatum. 'If you or your representatives are receptive to reasonable and prudent discussion', he wrote, 'the time to initiate this venture is now. The alternative is to remain silent and wait until the Browns' lease expires'. When Mayor Carl Stokes announced he would not run for re-election, all appearances were given that the ice surrounding negotiations would soon thaw.⁵⁹

The new regime of Mayor Ralph Perk acted with a bit more urgency regarding Municipal Stadium. Nick Mileti's 1971 announcement that he would construct a new arena for the Cavaliers and professional hockey in nearby Richfield, Ohio meant downtown Cleveland would further lose valuable components of its dwindling entertainment attractions. Keeping the Indians and Browns downtown was of the utmost importance for the new mayor. The booster press questioned if Modell and then-Indians owner Vernon Stouffer would also be tempted to leave downtown for the proverbial greener pastures of

suburbia. One astute reader pointed out in a letter to the editor that the only way for downtown to save its sports franchises and address its financial woes was to sell Municipal Stadium. Privatisation was the key to restore life and solvency to the aging facility. Modell, who was publicly negotiating with Cleveland to take over the stadium's concessions, must have salivated at such a proposal. With the city in a financial crunch, Modell could now force the issue of privatising Municipal Stadium. By becoming the stadium operator, Modell could return to his promotional roots and extend his business ventures into more profitable directions. Within the next two years, Modell would press the city further on this issue and receive outside help from his friends.⁶⁰

Perk tried to persuade, some would argue 'strong-arm', Mileti to reconsider building his new arena in downtown Cleveland, but his efforts came to no avail. At the same time, Modell initiated his own tactics, which also could be considered 'strong-arm', in his pursuit of becoming the operator of Municipal Stadium. In a subtle move, Modell purchased two hundred acres of land in the Cleveland suburb of Strongsville for \$4,000 per acre (a total of \$800,000). The land was conveniently located by two highways; providing an ideal location for a possible new suburban football stadium. Given the Cleveland area's preoccupation with stadium construction in the late 1960s and early 1970s, it was not farfetched for Modell to follow population and businesses into the suburbs without much public backlash. Building professional sports facilities in this locale was a pattern he had acknowledged when asked about Mileti's Coliseum by the media. When pressed further on the Browns' future in Cleveland, Modell responded, 'I'd listen to proposals [to move to the suburbs] because I'm a realist. Nothing can be done downtown with the priorities the city has'.⁶¹ He even had a model of the proposed facility constructed and put on display in his office. When seen by minority owner Bob Gries, Modell assured him that his intent was purely to shake up the city. What Modell never told Gries was that a study he had commissioned revealed that construction of a stadium in Strongsville would not be cheap and would be fought by the suburb's city council. But the illusion held more power than the reality of Strongsville stadium, and Modell's suburban land remained a visible threat. Everyone believed Modell was going to build a stadium in Strongsville. Mayor Perk came to Modell at the time, according to a former Modell employee, and said, 'I've already lost the Cavaliers and hockey. If you move to Strongsville, downtown Cleveland is done'.⁶²

The stalemate in lease negotiations with both the Browns and Indians had put the city in a bind. In March 1973 Edward Baugh, vice president of Christopher Associates submitted to Mayor Perk another ill-fated plan for the development of Municipal Stadium. Costing an estimated \$36.3 million, the Christopher Plan proposed eight million dollars in renovations for the stadium, twelve million for a new 4,000 car garage, and \$16.3 million for a new 20-24 storey hotel/apartment building, located at the east end of the stadium.

Christopher Associates would also operate the stadium through a lease with the city for the next fifty years. Baugh acknowledged that both Mileti and Modell would be invited to become operating partners and for the plan to succeed, it needed their approval as well as city officials. Ironically, Baugh was two years removed from his role in negotiating a lease with Modell while serving as director of public properties. Modell stated that he had no desire to enter into an operating partnership. In July, the Indians and Browns announced they would not agree to any lease with Christopher Associates, and the proposal was dead. Both parties found the plans for remodeling Municipal Stadium unnecessary and financially excessive, but Modell's vote had greater reasoning behind it. When the Christopher Plan was presented to Mayor Perk, he stated that he expected a second proposal from Sheldon Guren, president of US Realty Investments. Only weeks before nixing the Christopher Plan, Modell and Mileti had signed an agreement with Guren to work with Cleveland Stadium Corp. on all matters involving leases and renovation. Negotiating on behalf of Cleveland Stadium Corp. was none other than Guren's business partner, Art Modell.⁶³

'I'm tickled that Art Modell is about to become the custodian of the Stadium', wrote Hal Lebovitz upon the announcement that Cleveland officials and Modell's Stadium Corp. had reached an agreement on leasing out the facility's operations.⁶⁴ The deal was viewed as a 'win-win' scenario for each party. Cleveland was expected to save \$14 million in operating costs over the life of the 25 year lease with Cleveland Stadium Corp. Municipal Stadium was set to receive ten million dollars in improvements between 1975 and 1978. Modell and the Stadium Corp. were able to cut down on the financial burden of the stadium by arranging for the application of the city's three per cent admission tax towards payment of bonds used towards previous renovations (totaling \$4,400,000). For many, the finances were secondary to the stability the new lease was set to provide. No one could imagine the Browns leaving a structure Modell operated (Said Lebovitz, 'there was never a danger of the Browns moving out of the area'⁶⁵), and the agreement he and Mileti signed with Guren was thought to guarantee the Indians' downtown presence for at least ten years. Mayor Perk proudly boasted that 'the Indians and Browns will be here for 100 years'.⁶⁶ On 10 August 1973, Cleveland City Council introduced an emergency resolution that made Cleveland Stadium Corp. responsible for operations and improvements to Municipal Stadium and the stadium parking lot. On 11 October the resolution was approved. Within the next eight months the lease was amended several times to deal with a variety of issues including problems negotiating with the Indians and the Stadium Corp's request to have the renovation timeframe shortened to 1983 (after it had been extended from 1978 to 1986 in an earlier amendment). Regardless, Modell was now both landlord and tenant, and had a new means to implement the promotional skills he had developed in advertising while in New York. For all intensive purposes, Modell was on top of the world, or at least Cleveland.⁶⁷

Modell leapt into the role of the commercial promoter with his new control over Municipal Stadium. Roughly one year earlier a civic committee headed by George Steinbrenner had recommended the privatisation of stadium operations, saying that future success would best be accomplished if Municipal Stadium shifted from the control of politicians to that of business-oriented management. David Harris argued that Modell saw himself as that business-oriented management in 1972, and had achieved it by 1973. The Stadium Corp.'s first major renovation project called for the construction of a ring of loges, aka luxury suites or boxes, that would hang below the bottom lip of the stadium's upper deck. By mid-July 1974, Modell claimed over \$1.5 million had been spent on construction expenses and his priority at the time was to build the loges. According to a former employee, 'he figured that would be the saving part of the stadium'.⁶⁸ This, of course, counted against the ten million dollars in renovation by the Stadium Corp. agreed upon in its lease with the city. Upon completion of the loges, an electronic Scoreboard was slated as the next major project. Pre-sale of the loges (at \$15,000 each) accounted for \$500,000 in income for Modell and Guren by the end of 1974. If all 106 loges sold, they would cover their construction costs. While the booster press again praised Modell for modernising Municipal Stadium and working towards making the facility fan-friendly for sports, concerts and other entertainment spectacles, others wondered if loge construction was necessary.⁶⁹

Two major questions came out Stadium Corp.'s construction of loges. First, did they comply with the agreement for ten million dollars in renovations? Second, if the loges were neither necessary nor a priority, were they instead an instant means of profit for Modell and the Stadium Corp.? After 43 years of decay on the lake front, Municipal Stadium needed renovation. This was something that almost everyone could agree upon, but something Modell may have overlooked. According to a former employee, 'What [Art] didn't figure out was that the stadium was built in 1931 and it needed all new electrical work, all new plumbing work. The \$10 M commitment he made zoomed'.⁷⁰ But after spending roughly \$10,000 on repairing electrical connections, the loges became top priority. Here is where Modell differentiated between structural improvements and 'potential income producers', as David Harris points out.⁷¹ In 1974 and 1975, roughly \$3.7 million of the five million spent on the stadium went towards income producing efforts. Over the next two years, Modell committed two million dollars to the construction of a new Scoreboard that would generate one million annually in advertising.⁷²

While Modell told reporters that the loges, along with parking and concessions, were needed to ensure future profits that rent from the Browns and Indians could not produce on their own, local muckraker Roldo Bartimole found the loges and the lease troubling for the city. He revealed that the loges only benefited fans of distinguished taste and comfortable means who laid out at least \$15,000 for a season's usage. The average fan would not experience

improved sightlines or more comfortable seating from the construction. Bartimole again pointed out that if all 106 loges were sold by the start of the 1975 season, Modell and Guren would have \$1.59 million of instant profit (Harris estimated that the loges were designed to generate as much as \$2.4 million in yearly profits). More troubling, however, was the stipulation in the lease regarding the city's three per cent admission tax at the stadium. In early negotiations between Modell and the city, the Browns owner insisted that the Stadium Corp. not be responsible for payment of the bond indebtedness for past improvements. In the final lease agreement Modell negotiated a major coup in agreeing to pay the bond indebtedness and property taxes on the stadium, but only after the three per cent admission tax was subtracted. Essentially Modell arranged to have the city use its own money to pay for the bond debt of roughly \$4.4 million. Furthermore, the more fans Modell drew into Municipals Stadium during the course of the year, the lower his rent would be. With the ability to host additional events aside from baseball and football, the admission tax amount would increase while the rent would equally decrease. Bartimole pointed out how the city was going to lose money to the Stadium Corp. by reviewing a 1974 rock concert in which 88,000 people attended and produced a gate of \$830,000. The booster press proudly proclaimed that the event produced \$25,000 in admission tax, but failed to mention that this amount would be subtracted from the total rent, thereby creating no profit for the city. When combined with the \$14,000 the city contributed for police service for the concert, the lease lost some of its luster. The transfer of all parking and concessions to the Stadium Corp. by the city, and an additional payment of \$350,000 to the previous concession owners (who just happened to be Art Modell and the Browns) did not position Cleveland as the benefactor Mayor Perk had earlier portrayed it to be.⁷³

Despite the flawed nature of the Cleveland Stadium Corp. lease, early reviews from the booster press and civic leaders threw praise upon Modell for bringing life back into the 'white elephant' that had been decaying on the shores of Lake Erie for years. Events such as the World Series of Rock and Roll concert and Notre Dame vs. Navy football game exuded the promise of a bright future for the stadium and success of its new operator. Given the pomp and circumstance he garnered, Modell looked for new ventures into which he could extend himself. Privatisation of a public facility had worked once already, so Modell set his sights on Cleveland Public Hall. Riding this crest of public accolades regarding changes at the Stadium, Modell submitted a report to the city in 1976 addressing the Cleveland Public Hall & Convention Center. In 1974 Public Hall lost \$1.5 million and an additional \$1.1 million the following year. On top of its losses, the facility needed an estimated five million dollars in renovations to become serviceable. Cleveland could only commit three million dollars to renovations on its own. Modell's report argued that Public Hall could become a profitable facility again, but only if the city

met the needed conditions. He then offered his services in operating the facility, but only if the city wished to privatise Public Hall and asked him for his assistance. Tying together notions of his civic responsibility and an eye for promotion, Modell told reporters, 'I'd like to do it for the city and it would be a logical extension of what we are doing in the Stadium'.⁷⁴ A *Press* editorial seconded the notion of privatising Public Hall, but also cautioned, perhaps leery of the stadium lease and rumours of its problems, that the city could not give it away. The city took no action, and Modell again addressed this issue one year later. After pulling in the reins on his short-lived political ambitions, Modell told reports that he would not pursue entering politics, but would again be willing to operate the Public Hall if the city asked. Again, Cleveland officials never presented Modell with this opportunity.⁷⁵

In 1978 Modell again announced a plan to enhance Cleveland's downtown and further his promotional operations. Gone was his pursuit of Public Hall. Instead, he and former Cleveland Stadium Corp. partner Sheldon Guren stated that they were considering four locations for a downtown arena. It was presumed that Modell would operate the facility if erected. Modell pointed to a 'growing dissatisfaction' with the Richfield Coliseum as the reason for the renewed interest in a downtown arena, but interestingly he would not discuss the merits of the Coliseum and did not specify who held the 'growing dissatisfaction' he had alluded to. Emerging problems between the Cavaliers and the Coliseum in lease negotiations, and a public call for a new arena to serve Cuyahoga County, Cleveland, and/or Cleveland State University made by an Ohio Court of Appeals judge gave credence to the project. Modell and Guren asserted that any similarity in timing between their proposal, the negotiations at the Coliseum, and the judge's desire for a new sports facility was coincidental. The arena never left the planning stages, but the proposal again demonstrated the level of respect Modell garnered from the booster press and civic leaders. An editorial warned the public not to get too excited about the prospect of a new arena, but quickly reversed its tempered excitement by putting greater stock in the project because of Modell's involvement. While the plan was an opportunity unfulfilled, it was still an opportunity that not many others would have had acknowledged by the booster press and civic leaders.⁷⁶

Even though Modell neither took control of the operations of Public Hall nor built a new arena downtown, he was not without other opportunities in the traditional, central city. In 1976 the downtown Sheraton Hotel is placed in receivership to Modell. Judge John T. Patton recommended that the hotel, in the heart of the city and one of the few facilities with banquet space for conventions, be placed under Modell's watch given the Stadium Corp's apparent success. Patton argued that Modell possessed the business experience and confidence of the financial community to save the hotel from bankruptcy. As the hotel's ward, Modell was responsible for finding a buyer. 'This town has been good to me for 16 years, and I hope I can do something in saving a

Cleveland landmark that is vital to the success of Cleveland', he said following the judge's decision.⁷⁷ He also assured reporters that it was very unlikely that he would take on ownership of the hotel himself. Modell was praised for his commitment to restoring 'the health, vitality, and attractiveness' of downtown Cleveland.⁷⁸ Using the good name he held in the business community and receiving court approval, Modell borrowed \$150,000 to cover operating expenses for the Sheraton over the next three months, and ensure that the hotel and banquet space would remain open for business.⁷⁹

Modell gave up receivership of the Sheraton to Sam Miller in March 1977 when he became head of a group of local investors called 'Save the Square' who were looking to purchase the hotel. 'I didn't even want the appearance of a conflict of interests', Modell reported.⁸⁰ Within the coming month Modell's group arranged to purchase the hotel for four million dollars and put ten million dollars in renovations into the facility. Three local banks had already agreed to lend the group seven million dollars in total, and each individual member of "Save the Square" would put in a million apiece to cover the balance. In an act that greatly angered Bob Gries, who was now a partner with Modell in Cleveland Stadium Corp. as well as the Browns, Modell committed one million dollars from the Stadium Corp. to cover his share. It was also interesting to note that Sam Miller's wife was Ruth Miller, who served as community development director for Mayor Perk and was also in charge of tax abatements for Cleveland. One month prior to purchasing the Sheraton, Modell defended tax abatements given to National City Bank, one of the banks lending money to 'Save the Square'. In defending the abatement program as necessary for inducing downtown construction and development, he also announced that his group would request ten million dollars worth of tax abatements to cover proposed renovations to the Sheraton. In spite of the conflicts in interest at play, no criticism emerged from the booster press. On 8 August 1977 Modell's group, now officially named Public Square Hotel Co. Ltd. placed the only bid (\$2,519,334) on the Sheraton at a sheriff's auction. Public Square Ltd. had earlier purchased the first and second mortgages on the Sheraton for roughly three million dollars. The group then began the process of downsizing the hotel (going from 800 to 540 rooms) and reopening as part of the Stouffers Hotel chain. These plans were temporarily disturbed by the Local 10 of the Hotel, Motel, Restaurant and Bartenders Union which attempted to block the sale after nearly 250 union workers were laid off and were set to be replaced by non-union workers already in the Stouffers system. Modell took the brunt of public abuse from union protesters, who called him 'anti-union' and threatened to picket Municipal Stadium during Browns games. Once again he was defended, this time by a Stadium Corp. employee who took Modell's records of working with unions to the booster press, but it became more evident that the multiple opportunities Modell was receiving and acting upon were not based in the civic-minded responsibility in which they were framed.⁸¹

Despite the praise heaped upon Modell for his continued civic-minded gestures in saving the Sheraton and reviving Municipal Stadium, the extension of financial commitments began to take its toll on the Browns owner, privately if not publicly. Earlier warnings from area businessmen when he took over the stadium that ten million dollars was too little to reasonably improve the stadium and that the venture was a poor financial risk came to fruition. Even prior to this, however, Modell was arranging and rearranging his finances. In 1971 Modell had Cleveland Browns Inc. undergo a disproportionate redemption of stock that would in turn distribute cash back to team stockholders. Modell traded in 22 per cent of team stock (leaving him with 48 per cent of team stock) in order to receive four million dollars. Several minority partners would later sell out and Modell was there to buy their stock, giving him 53 per cent of the team. The Browns then took out a bank loan of seven million dollars to make payments on the stock redemptions. By 1974 the Browns were still eight million dollars in debt for this bank loan. Upon agreeing to the Stadium Corp. lease with Cleveland, Modell was informed by Sheldon Guren that he could not continue as a partner and would not be able to contribute any money to the venture. US Realty was involved in a 'major real estate scandal' according to Bob Gries, leaving Guren incapable of continuing in the Stadium Corp. Modell, now on his own, was subsequently forced by the banks to put up his shares of stock in the Browns and his land in Strongsville as collateral. Modell, in the meantime sought a new partner and targeted Gries in the process. In early 1976, Modell got Gries to buy into the Stadium Corp. which was then restructured so Modell controlled eighty per cent, Gries ten per cent, and various others ten per cent. Part of the restructuring also had the Stadium Corp. purchase the land once earmarked for a football stadium in Strongsville from Modell for four million dollars providing the Browns owner with a huge profit on his former investment and putting the Stadium Corp. three million dollars in debt.⁸²

The controversy surrounding the Cleveland Stadium Corp. and Art Modell reached its pinnacle in 1978 when allegations emerged that the city was being short-changed in rent payments. Modell's Stadium Corp was accused of making huge profits at the expense of the city. Specifically, Stadium Corp. was responsible for paying a minimum annual rent of \$150,000 as well as \$384,000 to cover the bond indebtedness and property taxes. The city's three per cent admission tax, however, was then deducted from that total; making up the final rent payment. The Indians paid an annual rent of \$250,000 to the Stadium Corp. that also could have been technically deducted from Modell's payments to the city. Bartimole reported in 1977 that the Stadium Corp. paid the city less than \$1,000 for all of 1976 given the system stated in the lease. 'They sent a check for \$700 to \$900', Bartimole quoted a city official as saying.⁸³ The Stadium Corp. controlled all concessions, two restaurants, stadium parking lot no. 1, and all revenue from Scoreboard advertising and television. Combined, this package was estimated to bring in approximately five millions dollars in

net profits. *Ohio Magazine* and Bartimole called the stadium lease a sweetheart deal, and Harris mentioned it was one of the top ten leases in the NFL. The booster press ignored the story, most likely based on Modell's comfy relations with the media. Modell argued that the admission tax total 'just about equaled the payment for property tax and debt'. When the story made its way into *Check-Off*, the NFL Players Association newsletter, Modell claimed it was an effort to poke fun of the Browns owner, and later had his lawyer state that the charges were 'inaccurate and totally misleading'. Mayor Dennis Kucinich eventually called for an audit to make sure the city was receiving its fair share, while Bartimole called for the city to tear up the lease arrangement with the Stadium Corp. But as 1978 came to an end, Cleveland found itself with the more pressing matter of city default, and Art Modell and the Stadium Corp. became minor issues.⁸⁴

Art Modell entered the 1970s as the essence of Cleveland's football team. Combining his sports connection with a variety of activities framed as civic-minded in nature, he transformed himself into one of Cleveland's most prominent civic leaders and the city's favorite 'adopted' son. As a commercial promoter, he looked beyond his entrepreneurial efforts in professional football and entered into a variety of new business ventures designed at continuing his aura of civic responsibility while simultaneously producing profits. But the formula did not work. Poor choices on the part of Modell and the deteriorating economic conditions of Cleveland worked against the Browns owner in the long run. Modell was emblematic of the changing fortunes of the city he had come to call his home. Unfortunately for both Modell and for Cleveland, this was not a problem that could easily be remedied. As t-shirts and banners proclaiming 'Losing is a work of "Art"' became commonplace in and around Municipal Stadium on game days in the late 1970s and beyond, they pointed less and less at the diminishing fortunes of a football team. Instead, and perhaps unbeknownst to those who donned that phrase, 'Losing is a work of "Art"' was a poignant reminder of the perils facing the sports entrepreneur when desire, and perhaps ego, surpassed sensibility and responsibility.

NOTES:

1. I defer any credit for the phrase, 'Losing is a work of "Art"' to any of the many Browns fans who donned this phrase on t-shirts and signs while heading into games during the lean years of the early 1990s. Perhaps no phrase better articulated the frustration of the average fan with the poor play of their hometown team and the blame they placed on the team's owner, Arthur Modell. Similarly, the symbolic mocking was also seen in another popular caricature: The Three Stooges: Larry, Curly, and Modell'.
2. S. Hardy, 'Entrepreneurs, Organizations, and the Sport Marketplace: Subjects in Search of Historians', *Journal of Sport History*, 13:1 (1986), p. 22.
3. Hardy, 'Entrepreneurs, Organizations, and the Sport Marketplace', pp. 14-16, 20-3. For an example of scholarly treatment of contemporary owners/entrepreneurs see C. Euchner, *Playing the Field: Why Sports Teams Move and Cities Fight to Keep Them*. (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993). Falling more into the category of a popular history, another example that points more in the direction of understanding the wholeness of the sports entrepreneur's business ventures (both sport and non-sport related), see D. Harris, *The League: The Rise and Decline of the NFL* (New York: Bantam Books, 1986).
4. S. Raiz, 'The Drummer Who Didn't Leave Town', *Cleveland* (Greater Cleveland Growth Association publication, 1972), p. 71.
5. F. Gibbons, 'New Owner to Find Brown's the Boss', *Cleveland Press* (to be cited as *Press*), 6 January 1961, p. D1.
6. G. Cobblestick, 'Plain Dealing', *Cleveland Plain Dealer* (to be cited as *PD*), 13 June 1953, p. 21; P. Brown with J. Clary, *PB: The Paul Brown Story* (New York: Atheneum, 1979), pp. 230-2. These works expand on the sale of the Browns from McBride to Jones. The *PD* column addresses rumours that McBride sold the team because he feared the wave of success was at an end and that the team was too old to compete further. Brown, in his autobiography, also addresses this rumour and suggests that McBride was pressured by his son in this regard. Brown also comments on his dealings with both McBride regarding the sale and with Ryan (and other key members of that ownership syndicate), and how tensions did exist.
7. Brown, *PB*, p. 262.
8. Brown, *PB*, pp. 262-6. Brown also expresses his belief that Modell manipulated his relationships with players and coaches to turn them against the head coach. Modell has since denied this belief and the comments attributed to him, yet sports journalists continued to link 'ego' into the equation that led to Brown's termination as coach. See, A. Zaiden, 'Nice Guy, Trying to Be Mean', *Cleveland Magazine*, Vol. 1 (September 1972), pp. 31-4; D. Clarke, 'Fall from Glory: The Wrecking of the Browns', *Cleveland Magazine*, Vol. 4 (December 1975), pp. 141-6, 200-208; B. Sudyk, 'The Rise and Fall of Paul Brown', *Cleveland Magazine*, Vol. 5 (October 1976), pp. 56-9, 93-101. For players' reactions to the firing of Paul Brown, see B. Parrish, *They Call it a Game*, (New York: Signet, 1971), pp. 99-103; J. Brown and S. Delshon, *Out of Bounds* (New

- York: Kensington Publishing Corp., 1989), pp. 101-105; J. Brown and M. Cope, *Off My Chest* (New York: Doubleday & Company, 1964), pp. 73-4. All three sources indicate that Modell was prepared to fire Paul Brown prior to the end of the season and before the players even indicated that they were ready to confront Brown over their concerns. Jim Brown indicates that the players wanted their coach to change his style of play calling, not get fired. In R. Dolgan, 'What Players Think About the Firing', in H. Lebovitz, ed., *Paul Brown: The Play He Didn't Call* (Cleveland, OH: Ra-Ka, Inc., 1963)pp. 12-14, 30, several members of the Browns comment to varying degrees on the firing. The one constant is that all felt some form of change was needed for the team to once again compete at the highest of levels.
9. F. Gibbons, 'It Was Like the Terminal Tower Toppling', in Lebovitz, ed., *Paul Brown: The Play He Didn't Call*, p. 26.
 10. H. Lebovitz, 'This Is Arthur Modell', in Lebovitz, ed., *Paul Brown: The Play He Didn't Call*, p. 6.
 11. H. Lebovitz, 'This Is Arthur Modell', in Lebovitz, ed., *Paul Brown: The Play He Didn't Call*, pp. 6-7; F. Gibbons, 'It Was Like the Terminal Tower Toppling', in Lebovitz, ed., *Paul Brown: The Play He Didn't Call*, pp. 8, 26. The newspaper strike lasted from 28 November 1962 until 8 April 1963. See P.W. Porter, *Cleveland: Confused City on a Seesaw* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1976), p. 219.
 12. J. Drake, 'Big Brown Boom', *Sports Illustrated* (to be cited as *SI*), 7 October 1963, pp. 17-19. See Lebovitz, *Paul Brown: The Play He Didn't Call* for several articles that cover the speculated role Jim Brown played in Paul Brown's firing. Also see T. Pluto, *When All the World Was Browns Town* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1997), pp. 47-50, 62.
 13. Letter from Jim Brown to Arthur Modell, 5 July 1966, Retrieved 20 February 2004 from the World Wide Web: <http://www.helmethut.com/JBretire.html>.
 14. T. Maule, 'The Curtain Falls on a Long Run', *SI*, 25 July 1966, pp. 18-24. See also, Brown and Delshon, *Out of Bounds*, pp. 109-112; Cleveland Browns Press Release, 16 June 1966; Letter from Jim Brown to Arthur Modell, 5 July 1966, Retrieved 20 February 2004 from the World Wide Web: <http://www.helmethut.com/JBretire.html>.
 15. Zaiden, 'Nice Guy, Trying to Be Mean', pp. 31-4.
 16. See H. Lebovitz, 'Hal Asks', *PD*, 3 September 1978. In looking at the timeframe of the Browns under Modell's ownership that fits with this study (1961-1978), there is a decisive difference in team performance and fan reaction (gauged in home attendance) between the first nine years and the latter nine years. Between 1961 and 1969, a period undeniably influenced by Paul Brown, the Browns' overall record was 84 wins, 38 losses, and four ties, with an average home attendance of 73, 611 per game. From 1970 to 1978, when Modell was unquestionably the public face and internal force of the team, the Browns' record was 63 wins, 63 losses, and two ties. Cleveland football fans noticed and attendance dropped for six straight seasons beginning in 1970. The overall average for home attendance during the latter nine years was 68,846 per game. Team records and attendance found at the Cleveland Browns official website: www.clevelandbrowns.com.

- clevelandbrowns.com. For information on the hiring of Forrest Gregg, see B. Levy, *Sam, Sipe, & Company: The Story of the Cleveland Browns*, (Cleveland, OH: J.T. Zupal & P.D. Dole, Publishers, 1981), pp. 185-91; C. Heaton, 'Plain Talk', *PD*, 9 July 1976, p. 1E.
17. D. Robertson, 'The timid Browns', *Press*, 5 December 1977, p. B-5.
 18. The following column headlines collectively add to the understanding of Modell as the Brown's face and the force behind the team. B. Scholl, 'Modell to be more active', *Press*, 20 August 1975; B. August, 'Modell faces critical decision', *Press*, 3 January 1975; H. Lebovitz, 'Hal Asks', 1 February 1976, p. Sec.3, 1; 3 September 1978, p. Sec. 3, 2. For more on the fallout between Modell and Gregg see, 'Modell wants some answers', *Press*, 28 November 1977; C. Heaton, "'We need help," says Modell', *PD*, 5 December 1977, p. 1-D; B. Scholl, 'Are Modell, Gregg on the outs?' *Press*, 5 December 1977, pp. C1-2; D. Clarke, 'Browns were "dead and buried team"—Gregg', *Press*, 5 December 1977, p. C4; B. August, 'Gregg's future cloudy', *Press*, 6 December 1977, p. C1; T. Rogers, 'Blame fate, not Gregg, for Browns' troubles', *Press*, 6 December 1977, p. C2. Just as had been the case when Modell fired Paul Brown, the termination of Forrest Gregg's tenure as coach was not without justification. Team performance aside, several players implied that Gregg's attitude and coaching style were laced with 'unnecessary' tirades. The booster press had also picked up on this. See Levy, *Sam, Sipe, & Company*, pp. 185-191. Please note that newspaper citations lacking page numbers came from the Art Modell clipping file in the *Cleveland Press* Collection, Cleveland State University Library, Special Collections (to be cited as CSU SC).
 19. The quote from an unnamed source comes from Harris, *The League*, p. 39.
 20. Harris, *The League*, p. 39.
 21. Clarke, 'Fall from Glory', p. 141.
 22. Harris, *The League*, p. 37.
 23. Harris, *The League*, p. 37.
 24. Harris, *The League*, pp. 37-9; Raiz, 'Drummer Who Didn't Leave Town', pp. 42-3; Clarke, 'Fall from Glory', pp. 141-2. Also, D. Zunt, 'Proud night for sports, city', *PD*, 14 February 1978, p. 3-C. Also note in regards to the Cleveland-New York sports rivalry in football, prior to the NFL-AFL merger, Modell's Browns went 10-6-1 against the New York Giants. See Levy, *Sam, Sipe, & Company*, pp. 232-3.
 25. Interview with Dino Lucarelli, 28 March 2003, Cleveland Browns Stadium. Lucarelli is the current Director of Alumni Relations for the Cleveland Browns, and was previously employed in similar positions with the Cleveland Barons in the 1960s and the Cleveland Indians in the late 1960s and early 1970s.
 26. H. Lebovitz, 'Hal Asks', *PD*, 24 August 1975, p. Sec. 3, 1.
 27. Lebovitz is arguably one of the most prominent and influential promoters for Modell during this time period. As sports editor for the *Plain Dealer*, he wielded influence on

his readers and on the material published on a daily basis. Bartimole mentioned fellow *PD* columnist, Chuck Heaton as another Modell shill.

28. 'Browns, Colts, Steelers In AFL', *PD*, 11 May 1969, pp. 1-A, 10-C; C. Heaton, 'Great for Football, Says Modell', *PD*, 11 May 1969, pp. 1-C, 10-C; Editorial, 'Browns to AFL', *PD*, 12 May 1969, p. 12-A; C. Heaton, 'Plain Talk', *PD*, 12 May 1969, p. 1-E; C. Heaton, 'Modell Quip Boomerangs', *PD*, 12 May 1969, p. 1-E; H. Lebovitz, 'After the Shock...', *PD*, 12 May 1969, p. 1-E; H. Lebovitz, 'Browns' Shift to AFL Is Gaining Support', *PD*, 12 May 1969, p. 4-E.
29. 'Sound Off (Mail Rips Into Modell)', *PD*, 14 May 1969, 1-F.
30. S. Povich, 'This Morning...', *Washington Post*, 4 September 1969 (from the Cleveland Browns Folder, Pro Football Hall of Fame archives, Canton, OH).
31. See also 'Sound Off (Mail Rips Into Modell)', *PD*, 14 May 1969, p. 1-F; 'Sound Off', *PD*, 18 May 1969, p. 9-C;
32. D. Clarke, 'Clarke on Sports', *Press*, 18 February 1978, p. C-1.
33. For information on the purchase of WJW by Modell and Gib Shanley see, 'Art, Gib won't change WJW radio's style', *Press*, 4 September 1976 (CSU SC); W. Hickey, 'WJW Radio sold to Modell, Shanley group', *PD*, 4 September 1976, p. 1-A. For the criticism of Modell's media relationships see, 'And Speaking of the Press', *Ohio Magazine*, 1 (May 1978), p. 13; and R. Bartimole, 'Censorship at the Press', 'Kamm-Modell association unhealthy', *Point of View* (to be cited as *POV*), 10 (18 March 1978), pp. 1-4. Bartimole was known as a local muckraker in Cleveland. *POV* was a newsletter he produced beginning in 1968 that was critical of the Cleveland power structures in place.
34. Bartimole, 'Censorship at the Press' and 'Kamm-Modell association unhealthy', *POV*, pp. 1-4.
35. Parrish, *They Call it a Game*, p. 119.
36. J.C. Teaford, *The Rough Road to Renaissance: Urban Revitalization in America, 1940-1985* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), pp. 200-203.
37. C.P. Miller and R.A. Wheeler, *Cleveland: A Concise History, 1796-1996*. 2nd ed. (Bloomington: Indian University Press, 1997), pp. 169-71; J.E. Bryan, 'Cleveland Gropes in Gloom While Others Revitalize', *PD*, 13 August 1972, p. 1-A; T.S. Andrzejewski, 'Suburbs here losing people just like city', *PD*, 18 May 1976, p. 2-B; R.H. Snyder, 'Population losses erode old cities' financial base', *PD*, 31 December 1978, p. 2.2. Bryan's article notes that Cleveland had lost 125,147 persons to the suburbs in the 1960s, and had also lost 46 manufacturing companies as well as 3,808 retail establishments.
38. For the full interview in the *PD*, see H. Lebovitz, 'Hal Asks', 3 September 1978, p. 3.2. According to the GCGA, 'Mr. Modell was indeed a very active member of the GCGA Board and served on the Executive Committee for many years (1982-1988). He

- was integral link in terms of his leadership and financial contributions to the greater Cleveland area'. In letter to the author from Carole Shaver, Executive Officer, Greater Cleveland Growth Association, 3 February 2004. Also, J.L. Koshar, 'Shining up Cleveland's image', *PD*, 10 December 1978, p. 7.3. For more elaborate demographic statistics see, 'Selected Characteristics: City of Cleveland', January 1972, Perk Collection, Container 47, Folder 696.
39. Editorial, 'Topflight Choices', *Press*, 9 September 1975 (CSU SC).
 40. For background on Modell's involvement in bringing the NBA to Cleveland, see 'Royals Please', *PD*, 9 March 1968, p. 8; 'PD Charities Given \$15,000 by Modell', *PD*, 20 April 1968, p. 49; H. Lebovitz, 'Hal Asks', *PD*, 8 February 1970, p. 2-C. For local media coverage of Modell's tenure as Grand Jury foreman see B. Bergen, 'Modell, CWRU prof to head Grand Jury', *Press*, 1 September 1975 (CSU SC); B. Bergen, 'Keep Grand Jury system, report by Modell urges', *Press*, 18 May 1976 (CSU SC); 'Modell, Lewis named foremen of grand juries', *PD*, 1 September 1975, p. 16-A; Editorial, 'Modell asks laws to aid crime victims', *PD*, 18 May 1976, p. 8-A.
 41. J.D. Rice, 'Rhodes-Modell slate lures Browns boss', *PD*, 4 March 1977; R. Mayes, 'Modell hints at run on Rhodes slate', *Press*, 4 March 1977; 'Modell gave \$1,000 to Rhodes' opponent', *PD*, 5 March 1977; 'Modell says he's out of politics', *Press*, 5 May 1977; W.F. Miller, 'If asked, Modell would run convention center for city', *PD*, 19 May 1977. For more information on Modell's frustrations with professional football, see H. Lebovitz, 'Hal Asks', *PD*, 2 February 1976, p. 1-C.
 42. Raiz, 'Drummer Who Didn't Leave Town', pp. 42-5, 71. For an expanded discussion of Nick Mileti and his sports entrepreneurial efforts in Cleveland see the forthcoming dissertation, P.C. Suchma, *From the Best of Times to the Worst of Times: Professional Sport and Urban Decline in a Tale of Two Clevelands, 1945-1978*. The Ohio State University, Spring 2005.
 43. B. Sudyk, 'Modell interested in joining Indians, will meet with Rozelle on "conflict"', *Press*, 26 April 1977 (CSU SC).
 44. 'Modell may go to bat to aid ailing Indians', *PD*, 26 April 1977 (CSU SG); B. Sudyk, 'Stockholders' arms open to Modell', *Press*, 27 April 1977 (CSU SC); 'Modell will be able to help Tribe', *Press*, 30 April 1977 (CSU SC).
 45. H. Lebovitz, 'Hal Asks', *PD*, 4 August 1977, p. 3-C.
 46. P. Hartman, 'Paul not essential to sale of Indians, Modell says', *Press*, 21 November 1977; R. Schneider, *The Cleveland Indians Encyclopedia* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1996), p. 335.
 47. Harris, *The League*, pp. 323-5.
 48. D. Zunt, 'Proud night for sports, city', *PD*, 14 February 1978, p. 3-C.
 49. C. Heaton, 'Modell deserving of Pride award', *PD*, 14 February 1978, p. 1-C

50. Lucarelli interview, 28 March 2003.
51. See Hardy, 'Entrepreneurs', pp. 20-3; Harris, *The League*, p. 39.
52. For more on the construction of Municipal Stadium, see P.C. Suchma, 'The Selling of Cleveland Municipal Stadium: The Linking of Progressive Era Ideals With the Emerging Consumer Culture', *Sport History Review*, 31:2 (2000), pp. 100-19. Also, see letter to the City Council of Cleveland, 5 January 1925, William R. Hopkins Collection, Mss. 3774, Container 1, Folder 19, Western Reserve Historical Society (WRHS), Cleveland, OH.
53. See, Suchma, 'Selling Municipal Stadium', pp. 106-16; *1993 Cleveland Indians Media Guide* (Cleveland Indians, 1993), p. 230; Schneider, *Cleveland Indians Encyclopedia*, pp. 354-62; 'Report on Revenue and Expenditures Attributed to Stadium in 1971', (No Author or Date), Ralph J. Perk Collection, Mss. 4456, Container 80, Folder 1247, WRHS.
54. B. Nichols, 'Modell Calls Stadium "Best in Entire Country"', *PD*, 18 June 1968, p. 37.
55. H. Lebovitz, 'Domed Stadium Step Closer', *PD*, 16 June 1968, p. A-1; Editorial, 'Stadium Plans Need Thrust', *PD*, 17 June 1968, p. 20; B. Nichols, '\$120,000 Pledged for Stadium Go-Ahead', 18 June 1968, p. 1; Editorial, 'New Stadium Gets Great Start', 18 June 1968, p. 16; 'Domed Stadium Pronounced Dead by All Concerned', *Press*, 11 February 1970, p. A1; D. Bloomfield, 'Report Snags Dome Stadium', *PD*, 11 February 1970, p. 1-A; Editorial, 'Stadium Study a Wasted of Money', *PD*, 12 February 1970, p. 12-A; G.E. Condon, 'And Then the Roof Fell In', *PD*, 13 February 1970, p. 9-A. Note that the \$120,000 payment for the Luckman study came from city, county and state public funds in the amount of \$40,000 each.
56. D. Coughlin, 'Can Stadium Be Domed', *PD*, 6 May 1970, p. 4-E.
57. Letter from Modell to Edward Baugh, 19 February 1971, Carl B. Stokes Papers, Mss. 4370, Container 29, Folder 524, WRHS.
58. Inter-office memo from Dearborn to Baugh, 15 June 1970, Carl B. Stokes Papers, Mss. 4370, Container 29, Folder 524, WRHS.
59. Editorial, 'Stadium Plan, Pro and Con', *PD*, 17 April 1971, p. 8-A; H. Lebovitz, 'Notes off the cuff', *PD*, 17 April 1971, p. 1-C. See also letter from Philip Dearborn to Art Modell, 4 September 1970, Carl B. Stokes Papers, Mss. 4370, Container 29, Folder 524, WRHS; Letter from Dearborn to Modell, 24 May 1971; Letter from Modell to Dearborn, 14 September 1970.
60. H. Lebovitz, 'Hal Asks', *PD*, 18 June 1971, p. 1-D; D. Coughlin, 'Vernon, Art Applaud', *PD*, 18 June 1971, p. 1-D; Letter from T. Bodle, 'Sound Off', *PD*, 27 June 1971, p. 10-B. For more on Modell's negotiations over stadium concessions see, letter from Modell to Perk, 13 March 1973, Perk Collection, Container 79, Folder 1228; Harris, *The League*, p. 41.
61. D. Coughlin, 'Vernon, Art Applaud', *PD*, 18 June 1971, p. 1-D, 2-D.

62. For newspaper coverage of Mayor Perk's various attempts to influence Mileti's location for the Coliseum, see H. Stainer, 'Perk Reveals \$100-Million Plan', *PD*, 11 June 1972, p. 1-A; 'Perk tries to force Mileti downtown', *Press*, 28 March 1973, p. A1; 'Perk Advises Firms to Drop Mileti Loges', *Press*, 29 March 1973. For information on the proposed Strongsville stadium see Harris, *The League*, p. 40; H. Lebovitz, 'Let's Keep Browns, Indians Downtown', *PD*, 10 October 1972; H. Lebovitz, 'Hal Asks', 4 February 1973; 18 March 1973. Also, Lucarelli interview, 28 March 2003.
63. For coverage in the booster press see H. Stainer, 'Plan Unveiled for Stadium's Development', *PD*, 11 March 1973, p. 1-A; H. Stainer 'Pay Stadium Bonds, Perk to Tell Modell', 8 July 1973, p. 1-A; 'Modell and Mileti React Warmly to Stadium Plan', *PD*, 11 March 1973, p. 12-A; A.A. Kermisch, 'Christopher Stadium Plan Scuttled', *PD*, 7 July 1973, p. 1-A. See also Letter from Edward J. Baugh to Modell, 26 February 1973, Perk Collection, Container 55, Folder 851; Inter-office memo from Norman Krumholz, Director of City Planning Commission to Perk, 23 March 1973, Perk Collection, Container 55, Folder 851. Krumholz tells Perk that he recommends 'disapproval' of the Christopher plan unless it is modified because it appears to be a much better deal for Christopher, Inc. than for Cleveland.
64. H. Lebovitz, 'Sigh of Relief', *PD*, 15 July 1973, p. 1-C.
65. Lebovitz, 'Sigh of Relief', p. 1-C
66. A.A. Kermisch, 'Perk and Modell Agree on Stadium Lease Plan', *PD*, 13 July 1973, p. 1-A.
67. Editorial, 'Stadium Plain Is Good News', *PD*, 13 July 1973, p. 2-B. See also City Resolution 636-73, 11 October 1973, Perk Collection, Container 81, Folder 1257; Ordinance No. 1514-73, Adopted 10 August 1973, *City Record (CR)*, 1381-1382; Ord. No. 1973-73, Adopted 29 October 1973, *CR*, 1668; Ord. No. 252-74, Passed 11 February 1974, *CR*, 454-455; Ord. No. 1618-74, Passed 29 July 1974, *CR*, 1563; and Ord. No. 903-75, Passed 16 June 1975, *CR*, 1264-1265.
68. Lucarelli interview, 8 March 2003.
69. H. Stainer, 'Perk, Modell agree on Stadium pact', *PD*, 3 February 1974, p. 8-A; H. Lebovitz, 'Rookies will report, we will play', *PD*, 14 July 1974, pp. 1-C, 10-C; R. Bartimole, 'Modell, Guren "Steal" Stadium from Cleveland; Neat Trick Has City Tax Reduce Their Rent', *POV*, 7 (November 1974), pp. 1-4.
70. Lucarelli interview, 28 March 2003.
71. Harris, *The League*, pp. 236.
72. C. Heaton, 'Notes...off the cuff', *PD*, 25 August 1973, p. 1-C; Harris, *The League*, pp. 236-7.
73. Harris, *The League*; Bartimole, 'Modell, Guren "Steal" Stadium from Cleveland', pp. 1-4.

74. N. Mlachak, 'Modell offering to run Convention Center here', *Press*, 27 May 1976 (CSUSC).
75. W.F. Miller, 'Modell report sees profits in Public Hall', *PD*, 27 May 1976; W.F. Miller, 'If asked, Modell would run convention center for city', *PD*, 19 May 1977 (CSU SC); Editorial, 'A private Public Hall?' *Press*, 31 May 1976 (CSU SC); 'Modell says he's out of politics', *Press*, 18 May 1977 (CSU SC).
76. N. Mlachak, 'Modell ponders arena in city', *Press*, 17 November 1978 (CSU SC); Editorial, 'A downtown arena?' *Press*, 18 November 1978.
77. W.F. Miller, 'Modell named hotel receiver', *PD*, 25 November 1976, p. 1-A.
78. Editorial, 'Hope for the Sheraton', *PD*, 26 November 1976, p. 10-A.
79. W.F. Miller, 'Modell receives OK to borrow for Sheraton payroll', *PD*, 16 December 1976 (CSU SC); 'Modell takes over Sheraton', *Press*, 25 November 1976 (CSU SC); N. Mlachak, 'Modell optimistic for hotel', *Press*, 26 November 1976 (CSU SC); 'Hotel will stay open, Modell stresses', *PD*, 27 November 1976 (CSU SC).
80. N. Mlachak, 'Sam Miller receiver for Sheraton Hotel here', *Press*, 8 March 1977 (CSU SC).
81. C.J. Jindra, 'Purchasers' agreement averts closing of Sheraton', *PD*, 9 April 1977 (CSU SC); 'Modell defend National City tax abatement', *Press*, 1 July 1977 (CSU SC); H. Stainer, 'Modell defends tax abatement for building projects', *PD*, 1 July 1977 (CSU SC); B. Bergen, 'Sale goes through on downtown hotel', *Press*, 8 August 1977 (CSU SC); W. Carlson, 'Modell combine buys Sheraton', *PD*, 9 August 1977 (CSU SC); N. Mlachak, 'Modell blistered in hotel dispute', *Press*, 11 August 1977 (CSU SC); N. Mlachak, 'Modell defended in labor dispute', *Press*, 12 August 1977 (CSU SC). Also, Harris, *The League*, pp. 237-8; R. Bartimole, 'The Stink', *POV*, 10 (July 1977), p. 4.
82. Harris, *The League*, pp. 38, 196-8, 234-6.
83. R. Bartimole, 'Modell-Guren Pay Less Than \$1,000 for Stadium', *POV*, 9 (March 1977), pp. 1-2.
84. R. Bartimole, 'Modell Charges Indians \$250,000 Stadium Rent Under City Lease', *POV*, 10 (February 1978), pp. 1-2; R. Bartimole, 'Fringe Benefits Benefit Modell Firm', *POV*, 10 (March 1978), pp. 1, 3; 'Modell Scores Financial TD', *Ohio Magazine*, 1 (December 1978), p. 11; 'Modell calls charges unjustified', *PD*, 24 December 1978, p. 3.3.