

PLAYERS ON ART MODELL

Former Broncos and Ravens TE Shannon Sharpe:

“Mr. Modell was one of the main reasons I came to Baltimore. I remember when I met him. He flew down to see me, and we flew back up to Baltimore together, and he learned so much about me and my family, and I learned about him as a man. I remember his words so vividly: He said, ‘Ozzie, get this deal done,’ and that was the start of something beautiful.

“One of my favorite moments in the NFL was when he spoke to us in the locker room after the Super Bowl victory. He said, ‘This is the proudest day of my life; you guys make me proud.’ And then he started to break down. That touched me. You could not only see the emotion from him and from all of us in that room, you could feel it. Knowing how long he had been in the NFL and how many great players he had been around, it was such a great feeling to give him something that he wanted for so long. We all wanted it for him!

“You see how close he was with his boys and how much he loved his wife, and he brought that atmosphere to the Ravens. He always had something positive to say, always had a joke to make you smile. I still picture him on his golf cart watching every practice, no matter what the weather was like. We were all in it together. The sport you see on TV today and what the NFL means to our society is in large part due to Mr. Modell.

“He was a great man, and I just wish that everyone got a chance to see him in the light that we did as players. It is a very sad day. I will miss my friend.”

Former Ravens T Jonathan Ogden:

“Art was more than a great owner; he was a great man. When I first met him, and he welcomed me to Baltimore, I knew he was special. The Ravens organization was a special place to be. He was more concerned with everyone else than he was about himself. Always wanted to know about how you and your family were doing. He is definitely one of the nicest, kindest people I have ever met. It would be very difficult to imagine what the NFL would be like today without a visionary like Art Modell. He was a ‘glass half full’ person every day of his life. I will never forget how he treated me and my family. He will always have a very special place in my heart.”

Ravens LB Ray Lewis:

“When you think about Art Modell, you think about a great man, a leader, a father and a servant. Every minute of his life, he cared more about everyone around him than himself. Anytime I saw him, he would always make me smile. He always had a joke to lighten your mood or some sort of wisdom to impart to make you a better man. I genuinely loved Art as a man, and he showed me what to strive for in life. When you truly see the impact he had on everyone he touched, it humbles you. When I found out he wasn’t doing well, I knew immediately I had to see him. When I was with him yesterday, I prayed with him and shared with him things that a son would say to a father. Even though he has left us, he is going to a place that one day we all want to be. I am truly blessed to have had Art in my life. He was a humble servant, and one of the best men I have ever known.”

Former Browns/Ravens DE Rob Burnett: “I met Art 20 years ago, and he was my boss for 12 years. Not many people have had a bigger influence on my life than he did. He is part of my family, and he has always made me feel like I was part of his. He was a trailblazer and a big reason why the NFL is where it is now. There are no owners in history who could compare to him as a philanthropist and businessman. You look at the things that he has done for people, how many times he gave people second, third and fourth chances when other people wouldn’t have. He was a great humanitarian. Any chance I get, I tell people what a special person he was. There aren’t many people I could say this about, but I always knew I could count on him, and I think he knew he could always count on me. I will miss him dearly.”

Former Browns/Ravens K Matt Stover:

“I worked for Art for 18 years, and he is paramount to what the NFL is today. He was a visionary, and everyone who works in or is a fan of the NFL owes Art Modell a debt of gratitude and great appreciation for what he did to make this game great. As a man, he was one of the most philanthropic people I know. All of the tremendous things he stood for he passed on to his family, community and the people that he worked with, and that has made the Ravens and the NFL a better place.

“Art always empowered me to be my best, and did the same for everyone around him. I remember in Cleveland when I missed a field goal and was down on myself, and Art called me on the sideline phone. He told me, ‘Just hit the next one, kid.’ I’m not sure how many other owners would have done that. He was a special man and will be sorely missed by my family and me.”

Former Browns and Ravens RB Earnest Byner:

“The thing about Mr. Modell, his heart was always one of giving. That man did a lot for Cleveland, he did a lot for the players that were on that team, and he gave a lot of people a lot of second chances in life. He’s a juggernaut in the league because of what he did for Monday Night Football. He was a visionary, and he had the heart of a champion. For me, that pretty much says it all.

“He gave me an opportunity. When I was deciding to retire, and I told him I wanted to coach. He told me, ‘You can go look around and see if anyone else wants to sign you, but you will always have a home here.’ When I came back, he allowed me to develop as a young coach, a young scout, let me work in the weight room – all the stuff I wanted to do. He gave me the ability to do that, and he looked after me the way a father would.

“The league might have taken longer to get where it is were it not for him. He had the vision and the forethought to put some things out there that other people hadn’t thought about, as far as handling revenue and how TV was being used to make the league bigger and better. I think that was really huge, really big for him to have that mind.

“I think he missed his calling – he should have been a comedian. He could tell a story, he could make light of different situations. We’d be busting a gut sometimes on some serious stuff, making some serious decisions, and be busting a gut because he had that natural gift of levity. I loved that about him and am definitely appreciative of all that he, Mrs. Modell and that family did for me.”

Former Ravens DT Tony Siragusa:

“Art was like a father to me and to all of his players. From the first time I met him, he always treated us players like his kids, but also treated us like men. When we won the Super Bowl, he was as big a part as anyone. We wanted to win it for him. Art was a man; you could talk to him about anything in life – not just football – and you would always come out wiser. Art is and always will be a family member to me.”

“When you look at the situation that players can be in, it’s such a cutthroat business, and there are a lot of tough decisions that have to be made. I am proud to say that I played for Art Modell. I am proud to say that I played for the Baltimore Ravens. I am proud to say that I am a part of this organization. I am proud to wear the championship ring that is on my finger, because Art Modell has set a high standard of quality, excellence, family and commitment to doing what is right. I will be forever grateful and indebted to the man that helped me in my career, as well as the impact he has made in my life as a man.

“Art has meant so much to not only the NFL community, but also the Ravens’ community and people of Baltimore and Maryland. I am thankful that I have been a part of that legacy. I am thankful that I have been able to be in a spot where it’s not about just playing a game, but it’s also about affecting other’s lives in a positive way. Art Modell, from the way he runs his organization to the way he carries himself as a man, has impacted me so much.

“I am so thankful that Art has been able to be a part of my life, especially at a time as a player when I was just starting my family. The one story that comes to my mind is when my son had a fall and broke his leg, and it required surgery. Art – he didn’t have to – but he made a phone call to the hospital about this. I remember sitting there stressed out, not sure whether my son was going to be able to be seen by a doctor. A person from the hospital came in and said, ‘You must know someone in high places. You are getting surgery pretty quickly.’ I was like, ‘Wow, OK!’ I came later to find out that it was Art who had made the call to have my family taken care of. He didn’t have to do that. He didn’t have to go out of his way.”

Former Ravens RB Jamal Lewis:

“Art meant so much to me because he gave me an opportunity when there were some people questioning me as a player and person. As an owner, he never missed a practice. Rain, sleet, snow, whatever, you always saw him on his cart. That set the tone for us as a team, especially during the Super Bowl run. He was at every practice, knew every player’s name and treated us like men. He ran a first-class organization, and what you see in the Ravens today was built on Art’s legacy. He was a great man, and as much as it saddens me that he is gone, I’m happy he is reunited with Pat.”

Former Browns, Cowboys and Dolphins QB Bernie Kosar:

“I had a special relationship with Mr. Modell, and he’s probably angry that I’m not calling him Art. We were close when I played for him and became even closer through our adversities. He was such a caring person. The first thing he would ask is, ‘How are you doing? How are the kids?’ He told me that I was like a son to him, and that made me proud. A lot of Clevelanders wouldn’t believe this, but Art is one of the most loyal and trusting persons I’ve ever met. Maybe that led him to some decisions that not everyone liked. But, he was tough – always willing to take the brunt of things on his shoulders. He didn’t blame others. This is a sad day for me. I truly valued his friendship and will miss that.”

Ohio Native and Former Baltimore Colts LB Stan White:

"I feel like I've known Art Modell and his family my whole life, growing up around Cleveland and growing up watching the Cleveland Browns as a kid. Playing in the NFL, my association with Art grew as I became involved with the league through the Players Association. Then, I represented [former Browns DB] Frank Minnifield, one of his players, and got to know Art even better at that point. Of course, when he brought the team to Baltimore, I got to know him – I wouldn't say intimately – but I got to know him fairly well. "Art, to me, is just one of the great men of football, along with the Rooneys and the Maras. The men like that built this game for everybody that ever played, particularly the guys that are playing today. We all know his involvement in getting television involved with the NFL, with Monday Night Football. But more so, with the way he ran a football team, he treated his players as men and really cared about them. It's a cruel business at times, but it's always how you do things, and Art always did it with class and dignity, and you couldn't say more about a person than you can say about Art.

"I coached his grandson at Gilman [School], and I got to know Art a little bit more through that. The whole Modell family has been such a gift to Baltimore, and Art Modell has been a gift to anybody who has ever been associated with football on any level – but particularly with the National Football League. Art Modell is a giant, and he will be missed."

Doug Dieken, the Longest-Tenured Player in Browns' History:

"The thing that always stands out for me when I think of Art is his sense of humor. He liked to laugh. We'd be angry at each other while negotiating a contract, would have our battles, and he would still find a way to bring humor into it. Art was the last millionaire in what has become a billionaire business, and he tried to make it work. He treated players fairly, and you knew he was in your corner. He was what I would call a 'players' owner.'

"I think the players today making so much money should thank Art for his contributions to their pockets. His work with generating more money through TV is a big part of the paychecks today. He was a real competitor. It hurt him to lose, and he'd wear it on his sleeve, just like he would the wins. He did all he could to make us winners.

"I think what he did when he left Cleveland was not right, but there were others here who were wrong, too. It's a shame that one decision hurt how some people think of him, because he did so much good. He gave people chances, and he helped a lot of people get a better life. He always looked out for the underdog and the underprivileged."

Former Browns RB/RS Dino Hall:

"Art had a passion and a real love for the game of football. He was the true fan. I can remember him walking the sidelines at camps and at game time; he really was a true fan of football. For a long time, he meant a lot to Cleveland in a positive way, and he was a positive influence in that he loved Cleveland."

Former Browns G Robert Jackson:

"From the time I was a rookie free agent with the Browns to today, Art made me feel like part of a family. That's the way he treated his players. He was very fair, often tearing up contracts of players who were playing better and giving them new ones. My era of Browns, we respected him. In fact, a bunch of

us got together in June and told stories about Art and those teams we played on. When I think of Art, I think of a good person who was fun to be around and knew how to have fun. And, I think of a person who cared a lot about people – how he could help them – and he did help so many.”

Former Browns RB Greg Pruitt:

"I have always thought so highly of Mr. Modell. And even after I got traded from the Browns to the Raiders, he made a point to apologize to me for the trade. It was something he didn't want to do. He drafted me, and I became a Cleveland Brown. We had a lot of good times. He was always a great guy to me, and I was very close to Mrs. Modell. I was in love with his wife and his kids. On road trips, the kids would always come around me, and I would babysit. That was good; I liked it."

Former Baltimore Colts RB Tom Matte:

"He was a special guy to me. I call him a very close friend. We came into the league together in 1961. What he's done for football can't be measured. This man deserves to be in the Hall of Fame."

Former Browns G John Wooten:

"First and foremost, our relationship goes back to the 1960's when he first bought the Cleveland Browns. He was one of the great, great owners in the NFL. He was a man that sacrificed and did the things to make the NFL what it is today. He was an owner who excelled in dealing with players, working with the public and making sure that our game was growing. He sacrificed.

"He worked alongside Lamar Hunt, Tex Schramm, Well Mara and Art Rooney – and all of those men are in the Hall of Fame. He worked with them in all of those meetings. He was there. It is indeed a shame that he is not in the Hall of Fame.

"I can't tell you how bad I want Art to be in the Hall of Fame."