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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Copley's \$5.2 M Sporting Sale 2018 Best Ever For Firm

PLYMOUTH, MA - Copley Fine Art Auctions, LLC (copleyart.com), the nation's premier sporting art and decoy auction house, realized \$5.2 million in sales during their recent two-day auction, held at the Hotel 1620 on July 19 and 20 in Plymouth, MA. The auction was 96% sold by lot, extending Copley's stellar track record. The sold lots achieved an impressive 110% of their high estimate.

Day one comprised Session III of the Donal C. O'Brien, Jr. Collection of Important American Sporting Art and Decoys, which achieved a 90% sold rate with a record-shattering average of over \$41,000 per decoy lot sold. This bested the record Copley set in 2017 with Session I of the O'Brien Collection, which averaged over \$27,000 per decoy. Session III pushed the historic McCleery auction to third place.

Over a dozen world records were achieved for artists or decoy makers in this historic sale. Eight decoy lots sold for six-figure prices. This represents a continuation of Copley's command over the quality decoy market, having sold more of the top decoys at auction than the rest of the field combined over the past decade. There was robust bidding across all categories, including paintings, prints, folk art, and antique and contemporary decoy carvings.

Copley's owner and principal, Stephen B. O'Brien, Jr., said, "The two separate catalogs showcased 16 cover lots and we sold all 16 lots. Not only did they sell well, but several shattered expectations. I'll take that result every time. The market for good decoys and sporting art is clearly on the rise, and the numbers are showing it."

Copley's decoy specialist, Colin McNair, added, "I was excited and impressed by the number of new buyers who recognized, and responded to, the opportunity to acquire top-tier decoys. I credit some of their participation to the rising standards of pre-auction vetting. This has allowed more bidders to participate with confidence at a high level. Our team shot over 350 decoy X-rays while cataloging this sale."

The Earnest-Gregory Dovetailed Goose, the top lot of the sale, surpassed the high estimate of \$800,000 and sold for \$810,000 after active competition on the phones. Although carved by an unknown maker, specialists in the decoy collecting world have long heralded the Gregory dovetailed birds as the very best the field has to offer. Copley's result bested the previous record for a dovetailed goose set in 2014 when its rigmate sold for \$632,000.

The O'Brien Collection got off to a roaring start with the first lot, a flying tern by A. Elmer Crowell, more than doubling its high estimate of \$25,000 to land at a sale price of \$60,000, setting a world record for a Crowell tern. The auction room was packed and the energy in the room was high as auctioneer Peter Coccoluto held the attention of the crowd.

The John B. Graham Canvasback Pair rose above its high estimate of \$175,000 and brought \$216,000. This pair, with painted "angel wing" backs and S-curve heads, graced the mantle of a

Charlestown, Maryland, home and was spared the exposure of the hunting grounds. The result set a world record for not only the maker, but the entire region.

Two lots later, an exceptional Phillips Rig preening black duck by A. Elmer Crowell doubled the high estimate and brought \$600,000. Black duck decoys were Crowell's signature species with hundreds carved in typical straight-head positions. His preening models are rare and reside in the country's top private and museum collections.

Charles S. Schoenheider, Sr.'s Standing Canada Goose shot above the high estimate of \$150,000 and sold for \$204,000 after competition from multiple phone bidders. Never previously offered at public auction, this hollow-bodied decoy, with its grand presence, excellent condition, and royal provenance, is considered the finest Schoenheider goose to ever cross the auction block. Bidders agreed, setting a record for the maker.

The Earnest Verity Plover shot to \$54,000, well over the \$35/\$45,000 estimate. Joseph W. Lincoln's greater yellowlegs nearly doubled the high estimate of \$4,500 and brought \$8,400.

The Ward Brothers captured the likeness of species in their carvings as well as any decoy makers in history, and their White Mallard Gun Club Rig of pinch-breast pintails are among their pinnacle works. This fine pinch-breast duo set a world record for a Ward lot and brought \$252,000 on a \$200/\$300,000 estimate.

The hollow black duck carved by Nathan Cobb, Jr. with an inletted head is one of the finest Cobb Island ducks known. In addition to Cobb's standard eye-groove carving and classic tail cut, this bold model features a well-proportioned and full body. After a pause to get all phone bidders on the line, it brought \$66,000 on a \$14/\$18,000 estimate, going to a buyer in the room.

A long-tailed duck pair by Joseph W. Lincoln sold for \$360,000, the highest sum ever paid for a Lincoln lot at auction. They surpassed their \$150/\$250,000 estimate after strong interest and competitive bidding from the phone bank.

The Gilley-Wilson Eider sold for \$186,000, just below the low estimate of \$200,000, making it, perhaps, the buy of the auction. Epitomizing the decoy as art, this boldly fashioned eider is one of the finest traditional Maine carvings to ever be offered at public auction, and, accordingly, it set the benchmark as the most expensive Wilson eider ever sold.

A sleeping black duck by Louis Rathmell doubled the high estimate of \$24,000 and realized \$48,000. A canvasback drake by Lee Dudley brought \$66,000 on \$30/\$50,000. Another Maine eider, this one by Arthur Poland, set a world record for the maker when it more than doubled its high estimate of \$24,000 and sold for \$57,000.

Folk art from the O'Brien Collection performed well, as an early mermaid carving with a beautifully sculpted face and flowing hair sold for \$10,200, above its high estimate of \$8,000. A hand-carved lamb more than doubled its high estimate of \$3,000, selling for \$6,600 after a battle between a floor bidder and the phones.

At the end of the day, interest in the decorative miniatures on offer was robust, as a George Boyd miniature eskimo curlew soared above the high estimate of \$5,000 and sold for \$8,400.

The hand-colored, Havell-edition Audubon of Long-billed Curlew with the city of Charleston, South Carolina, in the background exceeded its high estimate of \$60,000 and brought \$66,000 after competitive bidding on the phones. All book lots were 100% sold through with strong results and active bidding.

Day two of Copley's Sporting Sale demonstrated healthy interest in works by living carvers, as the first lots saw robust bidding from the floor, phones, absentee, and internet. Contemporary master carver Mark S. McNair's pintail drake opened over the asking price and ultimately brought \$5,400 on a high estimate of \$3,500. A swimming black duck carved by Ian McNair soared well above its high estimate of \$500 and sold for \$1,320 after bidding from all platforms.

The K. Barry and Janet Sharpless Collection offered an opportunity to acquire decoys that had not been on the market in half a century. An Elmer Crowell running yellowlegs surpassed its high estimate of \$8,500 and brought \$10,800. A tucked-head black-bellied plover rose above the \$8,000 high estimate and realized \$26,400, and an Obediah Verity black-bellied plover more than doubled the high estimate of \$900 when it sold for \$2,400.

From the Mark S. Smith Collection, a feeding yellowlegs, also part of the famed Phillips Rig, shot past its high estimate of \$95,000 and realized \$132,000. The Sutton Rig Preening Mallard landed within its \$50/\$70,000 estimate and sold for \$54,000. The Peabody Essex Long-Billed Curlew made by the Mason Decoy Factory realized \$36,000, landing right between the \$30/\$40,000 estimate.

The Ronald S. Swanson Collection saw active bidding across the board. The Laing Sleeping Canvasback Hen pushed past the high estimate of \$40,000 and realized \$45,000. This decoy, made around 1835, "was made [by Laing] for battery shooting on the Chesapeake Bay," according to Swanson, where these divers were plentiful and easily shipped by rail to the Northern market. A Verity Family sanderling brought five times its high estimate of \$900 and sold for \$4,500.

Also from the Swanson Collection, a group of four canvasback drakes from Upper Bay, Maryland, sold for \$7,800, bringing 13 times the high estimate of \$600. An Atlantic salmon model by Stephen R. Smith more than doubled its high estimate of \$4,000 and realized \$10,800. Another Atlantic salmon model by John Grytos brought \$9,600, more than quadrupling the high estimate of \$2,000.

The Davison Hawthorne Collection was popular with a 100% sell-through rate. An important golden plover pair by the Seabury Brothers saw active bidding and ultimately sold to a bidder in the room for \$9,000 on a \$5/\$7,500 estimate. A Lloyd Tyler pintail drake more than doubled the high estimate of \$900 and realized \$2,520. A sandpiper by Obediah Verity shot well above its high estimate of \$600 and brought \$1,920.

Folk art held strong as a copper turkey weathervane more than tripled its high estimate of \$2,500 and realized \$9,000. Canes garnered the interest of bidders, as a dog head and snake cane tripled their \$600 high estimates and brought \$1,920 and \$1,800, respectively.

The top lot of the painting portion of the sale was *Coming In*, an 1895 watercolor by Arthur B. Frost consigned from France, where the artist and his family spent many years living and

working. The atmospheric and detailed coastal marsh scene conveys and captures a satisfying day's hunt, and sold for \$48,000. A second painting by Frost, *Trout Fishing*, featuring a rare female angler, sold for \$9,600, above its \$6/9,000 estimate.

Perennial sporting art favorite Aiden Lassell Ripley's watercolor, *Setting Out*, brought \$30,000 on its \$25/30,000 estimate. The idyllic waterfowling scene conveys the promise of a good morning hunt as ducks fill the sky on a windy winter day. Lynn Bogue Hunt's oil, *On Point*, proved a good buy when it sold for \$18,000 on its \$18/24,000 estimate.

Milton C. Weiler's iconic watercolor, *Randy*, set a new world record for the artist when it sold for \$16,800, more than doubling its high estimate of \$7,000. This also more than doubled the previous record for the artist, set by Copley in 2014. The quail hunting scene was painted by Weiler for his friend, Davison Hawthorne, who requested an action portrait of his favorite gun dog, Randy. The work was published in Robert Elman's 1972 book, *The Great American Shooting Prints*.

Fine art by contemporary makers found ready buyers, as a photograph by Nick Brandt sold for \$11,400, more than doubling its \$5,000 high estimate. A buyer in the room took home the bold image of a pair of lions after out-competing international interest on the phones and online. A rare, large-scale acrylic work depicting trout fishing by Connecticut artist Chet Reneson sold for \$9,600, above its high estimate of \$8,000.

Smaller and affordable sporting art proved enduring, as a salmon fishing watercolor study by Ogden M. Pleissner titled *Study for Upper Malbaie, Grande River* sold for \$6,600, above its \$2/4,000 estimate. Lynn Bogue Hunt's oil of bobwhite quail titled *Alarmed* sold for \$6,600 on \$2/3,000 estimate, and a small gem of a painting by Francis Lee Jaques depicting deer in winter brought \$5,100, above its \$2/3,000 estimate. A humorous fishing scene by Hy Hintermeister, *Full Speed Ahead*, soared to \$8,400, almost tripling its high estimate of \$3,000. Two watercolors by Allan Brooks, an early Canadian bird artist, performed exceptionally well when they sold for \$4,800 and \$2,400 each on \$8/1,000 estimates.

Copley provided the convenience of online bidding through Bidsquare as well as the sporting art industry's first native app, Copley Live. The sale featured items from the Donal C. O'Brien, Jr. Collection of Important American Sporting Art and Decoys, the Ronald S. Swanson Collection, Davison B. Hathorne, and K. Barry and Janet Sharpless, among other notable collections.

Copley Fine Art Auctions, LLC, is now preparing for its Winter Sale 2019 which returns to Charleston, South Carolina, in February. The auction will be held in partnership with the Southeastern Wildlife Exposition (SEWE), the nation's premier sporting event, drawing over 40,000 attendees. Consignments will be accepted through November 15 or until full. For a free confidential auction estimate, call 617.536.0030 or email info@copleyart.com. A full list of official prices realized from Copley's Sporting Sale 2018 is available at www.copleyart.com. All prices include a 20% buyer's premium, records cite AskArt.com and *Decoy Magazine*.

For high resolution images, please contact Amy Lunderville at 617.536.0030 or amy@copleyart.com.

Images to Include:

Important Flying Tern, A. Elmer Crowell (1862-1952), \$15/\$25,000, Sold for \$60,000 (world record for a Crowell tern)

Canvasback Pair, John B. Graham (1822-1912), \$125/\$175,000, Sold for \$216,000 (world record for maker and region)

The Earnest-Gregory Dovetailed Canada Goose, O'Brien considered this to be "the finest decoy in his collection." \$500/\$800,000, Sold for \$810,000

Phillips Rig Preening Black Duck, A. Elmer Crowell (1862-1952), \$200/\$300,000, Sold for \$600,000

Standing Canada Goose, Charles S. Schoenheider, Sr. (1854-1924), \$100/\$150,000, Sold for \$204,000 (world record for maker)

Pinch-Breast Pintail Pair, The Ward Brothers, Lemuel T. (1896–1983) and Stephen (1895–1976), Crisfield, MD, O'Brien, an authority on the Ward Bros. stated these were "the finest pair of 'Pinch Breast' pintails the Wards ever made." \$200/\$30,000, Sold for \$252,000 (world record for Ward pair)

Black Duck, Nathan F. Cobb, Jr. (1825-1905), \$14/\$18,000, Sold for \$66,000 (world record for any Cobb black duck sold)

Long-Tailed Duck Pair, Joseph W. Lincoln (1859-1938), \$150/\$250,000, Sold for \$360,000 (world record for maker)

Sleeping Black Duck, Louis C. Rathmell (1898-1974), \$18/\$24,000, Sold for \$48,000

The Gilley-Wilson Eider, Augustus "Gus" Aaron Wilson (1864-1950), \$200/\$300,000, Sold for \$186,000

Canvasback Drake, Lee Dudley (1860-1942), \$30/\$50,000, Sold for \$66,000

Eider Drake, Arthur Poland, \$18/\$24,000, Sold for \$57,000 (world record for maker)

Mermaid, c. 1880, \$5/\$8,000, Sold for \$10,200

Lamb Carving, c. 1890, \$2/\$3,000, Sold for \$6,600

Miniature Eskimo Curlew, George H. Boyd (1873-1941), \$3/\$5,000, Sold for \$8,400

After John James Audubon (1785–1851), Long-Billed Curlew, hand-colored etching with aquatint and engraving, Sold for \$60,000

Swimming Black Duck, Ian McNair (b. 1981), \$4/\$500, Sold for \$1,320

Running Yellowlegs, A. Elmer Crowell (1862-1952), \$6,500/\$8,500, Sold for \$10,800

Tucked-Head Black-Bellied Plover, Charles E. "Shang" Wheeler (1872-1949), \$5/\$8,000, Sold for \$26,400

Feeding Yellowlegs, Dr. John C. Phillips Rig, \$75/\$95,000, Sold for \$132,000

The Sutton Rig Preening Mallard, Charles H. Perdew (1874-1963), \$50/\$70,000, Sold for \$54,000

The Peabody Essex Long-Billed Curlew, Mason Decoy Factory (1896-1924), \$30/\$40,000, Sold for \$36,000

Sleeping Canvasback Hen, Albert Davids Laing (1811-1886), \$30/\$40,000, Sold for \$45,000

Sanderling, Verity Family, \$6/\$900, Sold for \$4,500

Golden Plover, Capt. William J. Wyer (1822-1913), \$6/\$900, Sold for \$3,000

Atlantic Salmon Model, Stephen R. Smith (b. 1942), \$3/\$4,000, Sold for \$10,800

Important Golden Plover Pair, The Seabury Brothers, \$3/\$5,000, Sold for \$9,000

Pintail Drake, Lloyd J. Tyler (1898-1970), \$6/\$900, Sold for \$2,520

Arthur Burdett Frost (1851-1928), *Coming In*, 1895, watercolor, 17 1/4 by 25 1/2 in., \$30/\$50,000, Sold for \$48,000

Arthur Burdett Frost (1851-1928), *Trout Fishing*, watercolor and gouache, 10 by 13 1/2 in., \$6/\$9,000, Sold for \$9,600

Aiden Lassell Ripley (1896-1969), *Setting Out*, watercolor, 16 1/4 by 22 5/8 in., \$25/\$30,000, Sold for \$30,000

Lynn Bogue Hunt (1878-1960), *On Point*, oil on canvas, 23 by 31 in., \$18,000-\$24,000, Sold for \$18,000

Milton C. Weiler (1910-1974), *Randy*, watercolor, 13 ¼ by 16 ½ in., \$5/\$7,000, Sold for \$16,800
(world record for artist)

Henry "Hy" Hintermeister (1897-1970), *Full Speed Ahead*, oil on canvas, 21 by 33 in.,
\$2/\$3,000, Sold for \$8,400