



ARTIST HELPS UNIVERSITY HONOR FOOTBALL COACHES

Kalamazoo, MI, September 11, 2010—

Western Michigan University reveres its football coaches as much as other schools in places like Ann Arbor or Austin. But when it came time to find a way to honor those individuals the university wanted to do something more original than a plaque in the hallway. Bill Brown, namesake of the Bill Brown Alumni Football Center, knew that when he commissioned Kristy Darnell Battani to create a piece of artwork to anchor the lobby of the Center that she would bring a unique perspective to the project.

In addition to being a talented visual artist, Battani is the daughter of former WMU football coach Gary Darnell. "My life has always been intertwined with the highs and lows of college football," says Battani. "I was honored that Mr. Brown would entrust this project to me."

The artwork which measures 4-feet by 10-feet incorporates imagery of all fourteen of WMU's football coaches along with inscribed football plays, pieces of wire, mesh, and bits of real football pigskin. "Every time my father gets together with his coaching buddies, I make him put out a pile of paper and have each of them draw their favorite play. Without any hesitation, they can easily scribble down their all-time favorite, "never-fails" play. It always triggers great memories and stories."

The artwork entitled "Perseverance" is made using encaustic paints, an ancient art medium that infuses pigment with damar resin and wax. The result is a luminous, layered and heavily textured surface that allows for the embedded elements Battani favors. "I love the look, feel and smell of encaustic paint. It creates a depth and luminosity that is not possible in more traditional art media."

The artwork was unveiled at a ceremony prior to the WMU/Nicholls State football game on September 11. Five of the prior coaches were present for the ceremony.

"I loved being able to help this institution honor a group of individuals who played a significant role in their history. It was wonderful to be a part of team and to help them realize their goal."