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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

As the Downtown Festival & Art Show celebrates 30 years of artistic excellence, Festival Coordinator Linda Piper is proud to announce the selection of a poster artist who has played a crucial role in the festival's history. The 2011 poster artist, Mary McIntyre, served as one of the festival's first directors, and she and her husband have owned and operated a local stained glass studio and art gallery since 1980.

Though their inspirations come from many sources, much of Mary and Mike McIntyre's work depicts local flora and fauna. This year's poster image, featuring a stained glass representation of a sandhill crane nestled among a magnolia and palm tree, is no exception.



Sandhill cranes live in Florida's marshes and prairies. Most noticeable during the fall and spring seasons, McIntyre said, these birds announce their annual return to Florida with distinctive calls that cause locals to stop, listen and appreciate the rich and vibrant natural beauty of north central Florida.

Mary McIntyre has been a full-time stained glass artist in Gainesville for more than 30 years. Mostly self-taught, McIntyre graduated from the University of Florida with a degree in education. Her husband studied architecture at UF, and he and his fellow students were asked to design a building for a stained glass studio. A slideshow of the studio's stained glass images sparked Mary and Mike McIntyre's interest in this beautiful medium. On a trip to California in 1976, they were further exposed to stained glass craftsmanship at a local art gallery. That same year, they began designing stained glass of their own, and they opened their first studio in downtown Gainesville in 1980.

The nuances and creative possibilities of this medium and the ever-changing effects of light passing through glass continue to challenge and fascinate them, McIntyre said. McIntyre creates her award-winning work through time-honored, traditional techniques in order to ensure the structural integrity of her pieces. A strong sense of design, attention to detail and a commitment to superb craftsmanship are hallmarks of the pieces she and her husband produce.

McIntyre Stained Glass Studio & Art Gallery provides custom stained glass creations for businesses, homes and churches. The McIntyres offer stained glass lessons in addition to repairs and restoration for damaged stained glass.

T-shirts and posters with McIntyre's image will be available at the 2011 Downtown Festival & Art Show, which will be held on Saturday, Nov. 12 and Sunday, Nov. 13 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. The festival will fill historic downtown, from City Hall to the Hippodrome State Theatre, with art, fine cuisine and live music and entertainment on three stages. A collection of 250 of the nation's top artists will display their original oils and acrylics, vibrant watercolors, breathtaking sculptures, elegant jewelry, decorative ceramics and stunning photography. Children can also create their own masterpieces at the "Imagination Station," which offers a vast selection of free, hands-on art activities.

The festival is free and open to the public. For more information, visit www.gviculturalaffairs.org or call 352-334-ARTS.