

PARSONS PUBLIC RELATIONS

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Parsons School of Design Honors Saks Fifth Avenue and Chairman and CEO Fred Wilson at 57th Annual Benefit and Fashion Show

Fashion Show to Feature Collections by Parsons Designer of the Year Jennifer Breeden and 18 Gold Thimble Award Winners as well as special collections for the Vespa, PETA and Saks Fifth Avenue



From runway to SFA following the 2004 Parsons Benefit and Fashion Show

NEW YORK, May 9, 2005 – Tonight, Parsons School of Design, a division of New School University, held its 57th Annual Benefit and Fashion Show honoring Saks Fifth Avenue and its Chairman and CEO Fred Wilson. More than 750 guests attended this year's event, which took place at Pier 60 at the Chelsea Piers, and raised over \$1.8 million. The funds will go toward scholarships and academic programs, and is the university's largest fundraising event of the year. The highly anticipated Fashion Show featured the best collections of Parsons graduating fashion design students, including Designer of the Year Jennifer Breeden, and 18 recipients of the Gold Thimble for Design Excellence.

"The Parsons Benefit and Fashion Show showcases some of the most gifted students emerging from our fashion design program, whose rigorous curriculum has played an important role in establishing Parsons as one of the leading institutions for the study of fashion design," said Parsons Dean Paul Goldberger. "It is particularly apt that we are honoring Fred Wilson and Saks, since he and the company have been tremendous supporters of Parsons, from featuring student fashions in its world-famous windows on Fifth Avenue to nurturing the careers of our most illustrious alumni."

At the benefit, Wilson was feted in a presentation led by Leonard Lauder, Chairman of The Estée Lauder Companies Inc. and a Benefit co-chair. Other co-chairs included Arnold Aronson; Richard Beckman, President, Condé Nast Media Group; Cathleen P. Black, President, Hearst Publications; Dan Brestle, CEO, The Estée Lauder Companies, Inc.; Yves Carcelle, President, Louis Vuitton; Paul R. Charron, Chairman and Chief Executive, Liz Claiborne Inc.; David Ford; Lew Frankfort, CEO, Coach; Ronald Frasch, Vice Chairman and Chief Merchant, Saks Fifth Avenue; Andrew Jennings, President and COO, Saks Fifth Avenue; Sheila C. Johnson, Salamander Hospitality LLC; Jones Apparel Group, Inc.; Donna Karan; R. Brad Martin, Chairman and CEO, Saks Incorporated; Oscar de la Renta; Elie Tahari; Theory; and Marvin Traub.

"At Saks, we believe in providing our customers with collections that showcase the best new talent in the fashion industry, as well as more established designers," said Fred Wilson, Chairman and CEO of Saks Fifth Avenue, at the benefit. "It is with that belief that we have built a strong connection with fashion programs such as Parsons, which is one of the best design schools in the world."

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Following the Benefit and Fashion Show, collections by Parsons students will once again be featured in the windows of Saks Fifth Avenue's flagship store, continuing a tradition established last year. The fashions will be on display from May 12-19.

About the Fashion Show

In its 57-year history, the Fashion Show has launched the careers of some of Parsons' most talented alumni including rising stars Jack McCollough and Lazaro Hernandez of Proenza Schouler and last year's honoree, Marc Jacobs. This year's Designer of the Year is Jennifer Breeden, 27, of Chapel Hill, NC, whose women's sportswear thesis collection is inspired by Jeanne Moreau – smart, enigmatic, seductive yet refined, with a focus on silhouettes, volumes and fabric treatments.

The senior thesis process is the culmination of four years of intensive study in Parsons' BFA Fashion Design Program. "The fashion show represents the best and the brightest of our senior thesis collections, which are the ultimate realization of the personal design philosophies cultivated by our students during their education at Parsons," said Parsons Fashion Chair Tim Gunn.

The year-long process encourages innovation and experimentation, beginning with the submission of sketches, development of muslin prototypes, and months of intensive construction, fittings and assessment. It culminates with student presentations to panels of distinguished designers, editors, fashion directors and other industry leaders, which this year included Elle Fashion Director Nina Garcia; Barneys New York Fashion Director Julie Gilhart; Paper Magazine Editor Kim Hastreiter; Lazaro Hernandez and Jack McCollough; Jeffrey Founder Jeffrey Kalinsky; Coach President and Parsons Alumnus Reed Krakoff; Grace Mirabella; Zac Posen; Vogue Fashion Director Virginia Smith; Parsons Alumni Yeohlee Teng and Cynthia Steffe; and Parsons Board Member Diane von Furstenberg.

In addition to the Designer of the Year, Parsons presented the collections of 18 Gold Thimble for Design Excellence recipients: Patricia Bagattini, 22, Sao Paulo, Brazil; Bensoni, the design team of Benjamin Clyburn, 21, and Sonia Yoon, 24, Baltimore and London/New York, respectively; Pamela Bosques, 22, San Juan, Puerto Rico; the design team of Sariah Carson, 22, and Jaylin Potter, 22, Dallas and Rhode Island, respectively; Clark Chung, 23, Dallas; Louise Ferrari, 23, The Bronx, NY; Hasan Foster, 24, Coatesville, PA; Brian Paul Franklin, 29, Baltimore; Shirley Ho, 24, Taipei, Taiwan; Tzu-Hsiang Logan Lin, 22, Taipei, Taiwan; Azra Musemic, 29, Zagreb, Croatia; Rhea Ng, 25, Vancouver, British Columbia; Melissa VanRoo, 22, Indonesia and New York; Ingrun Von Keudell, 24, Munich, Germany; Sarah Waldo, 23, Cape Cod, MA; and Dawn Wanshi Mai, 23, Hong Kong, China.

The Fashion Show also featured special collaborations with PETA, Saks Fifth Avenue and Piaggio USA Inc., which ranged from designs inspired by the pre-eminent icon of Italian style, Piaggio's Vespa scooter, as well as works that showcased the innovative use of materials not derived from animal byproducts, and fantastical creations commissioned by Saks Fifth Avenue for its 2004 holiday windows. Also walking the runway was the collection of Parsons Student Jamie Kim, who won a special competition sponsored by Bucol-Solstiss, which provided fabrics for her collection.

"Special projects provide additional real world experience that gives our graduates a leading edge as they embark on promising careers in the fashion industry," said Gunn.

With the launch of the first fashion design program in America in 1906, Parsons School of Design gave birth to Seventh Avenue, the epicenter of the industry. Parsons graduates together form a who's who list in fashion, from such legendary designers as Adrian, Claire McCardell, and Norman Norell, to industry leaders Tom Ford, Marc Jacobs, Donna Karan, Isaac Mizrahi, Narciso Rodriguez, and Yeohlee Teng, to emerging talents such as Doo.Ri, Derek Lam, Proenza Schouler, Behnaz Sarafpour, and Peter Som.

About the Honoree

Saks Fifth Avenue Enterprises, a member of the Saks Incorporated group of stores, comprises 57 stores throughout the United States, 52 Off 5th outlet stores, and saks.com, the company's e-commerce site. Prior to his appointment as Chairman and CEO of Saks Fifth Avenue, Fred Wilson served as Chairman of the Board, President and CEO of the Donna Karan Company as well as Chairman and CEO of eLUXURY.com, the LVMH E-store based in San Francisco, and CEO of the LVMH Fashion Group for the Americas. Before moving to New York in 2000, Wilson held positions in department store retailing for 10 years between 1969 and 1979 with Federated Department Stores and Associated Dry Goods. He then joined DFS Group Limited (the duty free group) in 1979, serving as President and Chief Merchandising Officer for his last 10 years with the company (DFS was purchased by LVMH in 1996). After DFS, he became CEO for the LVMH Specialty Store Retail division developing new retail concept initiatives for the group, as well as eLUXURY.com.

About Parsons School of Design

Located in the heart of New York City, Parsons School of Design, a division of New School University, is one of the largest degree-granting colleges of art and design in the nation, with more than 3,000 students in degree programs, and 2,500 non-degree students from all 50 states and approximately 60 countries. The School's dean is Paul Goldberger, the Pulitzer-prize winning architecture and design critic and writer. Parsons has been a forerunner in the field of art and design since its founding in 1896 as the Chase School, named after American impressionist painter William Merrit Chase. By locating visual beauty in the ordinary things of middle-class American life, Parsons virtually invented the modern concept of design in America. Internationalism has always been an essential ingredient of Parsons' success. In 1920, Parsons was the first art and design school in America to found a campus abroad. Today, Parsons has affiliate schools in Paris; Kanazawa, Japan; Seoul, South Korea; and Altos de Chavon in the Dominican Republic. Parsons' rigorous programs and distinguished faculty embrace curricular innovation, pioneer new uses of technology, and instill in students a global perspective in design. For more information, visit www.parsons.edu.

This year's Fashion Show was made possible in part by the in-kind support of Zotos (Hair); Van Cleef & Arpels (Jewelry); and Shiseido (makeup).

An exhibition of collections by the entire graduating class of Parsons Fashion Program will take place May 17 at the DVF Studio. A presentation of fashion collections by junior-year students created under the guidance of designer-critics including Peter Som and Jeffrey Chow, will take place on May 13 at Parsons School of Design. For more information on these events, please contact parsonspr@newschool.edu.

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For images or b-roll of the runway show or honoree presentation, please contact Parsons Public Relations at parsonspr@newschool.edu or 212-229-5314 x4399.