

ATLANTA BALLET

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NEWS RELEASE

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Belk Inc. Announces Multi-Year Presenting Sponsorship of Atlanta Ballet's Nutcracker

(Atlanta Georgia) –Atlanta Ballet and Belk, Inc. have formed a partnership which designates Belk as the presenting sponsor of *Atlanta ballet's Nutcracker* for the next two years. The agreement was announced today by Atlanta Ballet Executive Director Barry Hughson and Belk Inc. Southern Division Chairman Dave Penrod.

"We are honored and excited about this new relationship which we expect to significantly raise the visibility of both entities," said Atlanta Ballet's Hughson. "This partnership is a symbol of both the strength of the arts in Atlanta and our world-class city as a whole."

As presenting sponsor for *Atlanta Ballet's Nutcracker*, Belk will promote the event in its Atlanta area stores and encourage support of the ballet and *Nutcracker* through its participation in the ballet's holiday community appearances.

"Belk is pleased to be a partner with Atlanta Ballet in presenting the holiday performances of the Nutcracker at the fabulous Fox Theater," said Penrod. "Our stores have a proud heritage of supporting the arts and worthy community causes, and we're thrilled to be a part of this wonderful long-standing tradition of *Nutcracker* performances that thousands of Atlanta families and visitors enjoy each year."

Atlanta Ballet's Nutcracker opens on Friday, December 5th and runs through the 28th at the Fabulous Fox Theatre. For more information on *Atlanta Ballet's Nutcracker* or to purchase tickets, visit atlantaballet.com or call 404-817-8700.

About the Atlanta Ballet

Founded in 1929, Atlanta Ballet is the longest continuously operating ballet company in the United States. Atlanta Ballet's eclectic repertoire spans ballet history, highlighted by beloved classics and inventive originals.

Among Atlanta Ballet's proud and unique 75-year history are its three Artistic Directors, Miss Dorothy Alexander, whose vision brought dance to the South; Robert Barnett, who turned Atlanta Ballet into a professional company; and currently, John McFall. Under McFall's leadership Atlanta Ballet continues its commitment to share and educate audiences on the empowering joy of dance.

Atlanta Ballet opened the Centre for Dance Education in 1996 and is dedicated to nurturing young dancers while providing an outlet for adults to express their creativity. With diverse class offerings and student population, the Centre serves over 150,000 people in metro Atlanta each year. Atlanta Ballet's roots remain firmly grounded in the Atlanta community and continue to play a vital role in the city's cultural growth and revitalization.

About Belk, Inc.

Atlanta is Belk's largest market with 21 store locations. The Charlotte, N.C.-based company is the largest privately owned department store company in the United States with 307 stores in 16 southern states. The company was founded in 1888 by William Henry Belk in Monroe, N.C., and is in the third generation of Belk family leadership.

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