



Family Shoe Store

For More Information

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THE BARN FAMILY SHOE STORE CELEBRATES 60TH ANNIVERSARY AS METROWEST LANDMARK

WEST NEWTON, MA, Feb. 5, 2008 – When entrepreneur Russell Wennbergh started selling shoes from the trunk of his car in 1948, he could hardly have imagined the tradition he was creating for families in the Metrowest area. From these humble beginnings emerged The Barn Family Shoe Store, an area landmark celebrating its 60th Anniversary in 2008.

Over the past 60 years, The Barn has become one of Southern New England’s leading destinations for shoes for the entire family, featuring hundreds of brands and styles for every occasion. Family owned and operated since its founding, The Barn is now owned by Wennbergh’s daughter, Karen Stives, who achieved international fame as an Olympic athlete and for her groundbreaking achievements as an equestrian before taking over the store in 1995.

“My father had a vision far ahead of his time when he founded The Barn. Like many entrepreneurs, he knew that to achieve big things, you have to start small, so he began the business by selling sneakers at discount prices from the trunk of his car. He then rented warehouse space where the shoes were sold from bins and were sorted by size rather than style,” Stives recalls.

The business flourished as families in the Newton area flocked to the new “store,” seeking quality shoes at off-prices. Wennbergh eventually took over the entire warehouse at 25 Kempton Place, off Washington Street in West Newton. The Barn remains in this original location, carrying the top quality brands and styles in dress and casual shoes for men, women and children. An equally wide selection of boots, athletic footwear, activewear and sporting goods rounds out its merchandise.

Wennbergh operated The Barn until his death in 1964, when his wife Lillian assumed the leadership role in the business, running it for nearly 30 years and continuing its tradition as a successful family-owned and operated enterprise.

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“Like my father, my mother was a ground-breaker. She took over The Barn at a time when few women were running companies. She had a natural talent for business and a common sense approach that enabled her not only to continue what my dad had started, but also to grow the loyalty of the store’s customer base year by year. We are very proud that The Barn has become a true landmark, run by a family for other families in the area – the store where multiple generations have shopped together. Almost every day I hear a customer say, ‘When I was a kid, I remember when my mother always took me to The Barn to shop for shoes’. It’s an incredible feeling to hear how much a part our store has played in the lives of families,” says Stives.

Stives expanded the family concept behind The Barn by opening The Kids Barn. Located adjacent to The Barn, The Kids Barn is an entire store dedicated to children’s footwear, activewear and sporting goods, from infants to teenagers. The Kids Barn has been accorded Boston Magazine’s prestigious *Best of Boston – Best Children’s Shoe Store* award. Along with The Barn, The Kids Barn has repeatedly received the TAB Newspaper’s *#1 Readers Choice Award*. This year, during its 60th Anniversary, The Barn has added to the numerous accolades it has won since its founding by being named Retailer of the Year by the Boston Shoe Traveler’s Association (BSTA).

Like her parents before her, Stives has demonstrated a natural flair for business and for achieving lofty goals. She represented the United States in international equestrian events from 1980 to 1988 in Three-Day Eventing – one of the most challenging disciplines in equestrian sports – and achieved world acclaim when she won Team Gold and Individual Silver Medals in the 1984 Olympic Games, held in Los Angeles. In so doing, she became the first woman ever to win an Olympic medal in Three-Day Eventing.

While assuming ownership of The Barn signaled a new direction for Stives, she drew upon the same focus, determination and passion that made her a world-class rider to become an equally successful business owner. As with world class competition, Stives knows only too well that building a strong team that can see and act on challenges in unison is essential for maximizing success. Joe Carrigan, vice president and general manager, has been instrumental in leading The Barn’s team. “My mother and I are grateful that Joe, his managers, and staff continue the tradition of providing the service and selection that my father would be proud of,” Stives added.

“Our goal is to continue our tradition as Greater Boston’s favorite family shoe store,” notes Stives. “Everyone involved with The Barn Family Shoe Store and The Kids Barn is focused on giving customers of all ages the kind of positive and memorable experience that will lead to them making the store a family tradition of their own.”

About The Barn Family Shoe Store and The Kids Barn

Family-owned and operated for 60 years, The Barn is located in West Newton, Massachusetts. The Barn Family Shoe Store and The Kids Barn (www.thebarnfamilyshoestore.com) have become Southern New England’s favorite destination for top quality footwear for the entire family, delivering an unmatched combination of top quality brands with a vast array of styles, backed by excellent service and competitive pricing. Conveniently located near the Massachusetts Turnpike and I-95/Route 128, the store is open seven days a week. For more information, visit the website at www.thebarnfamilyshoestore.com or call (617) 332-6300.

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