

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Women & shoes – the perfect love affair**

## **BAM presents retrospective of acclaimed shoe designer Beth Levine with support from Nordstrom**

**On view February 18 - June 6, 2010**

**Bellevue, WA** – This winter, **Bellevue Arts Museum** brings to light the work and life of one of the greatest shoe designers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century: Beth Levine. Featuring ephemera and over 100 shoes and boots, **Beth Levine: First Lady of Shoes** will open its doors **February 18, 2010** and run through **June 6, 2010**. Originally organized by The Dutch Leather and Shoe Museum, BAM is the **only U.S. venue** to showcase this fascinating exhibition.

Long before the rise of Jimmy Choo and Christian Louboutin, Beth Levine (1914 - 2006) revolutionized the fashion world with her incredibly artful and irresistible shoe designs. A true visionary in her field, Levine popularized such styles as mules, stilettos and fashion boots. Her shoes became favorites among designers and celebrities alike, from Halston to Geoffrey Beene, Marilyn Monroe to Cher, as well as four of America's First Ladies.

Born in 1914 into a family of Jewish farmers on Long Island, NY, Beth Levine was the first successful female shoe designer in an era and field dominated by men. In 1950, Beth and her husband started a shoe factory in New York where she designed shoes under his name, Herbert Levine. Finding her start as a shoe model, she was uniquely suited to understanding the needs of women's shoes, and was known for the comfort, wearability and beauty of her designs. Both practical and whimsical, she is credited with numerous 'firsts' such as the Spring-o-lator and the topless 'No' shoe. While the artist's name remains virtually unknown, her designs are not, such as the iconic white go-go boots made famous by Nancy Sinatra's 1966 song, "These boots are made for walkin'."

The local presentation of **Beth Levine: First Lady of Shoes** has been made possible through the generous support of **Nordstrom**. "We are honored to support BAM and this exhibit," said Nordstrom Bellevue Square Store Manager, Doug McCoy. "Nordstrom started out as a shoe store in the Pacific Northwest over 100 years ago so this partnership is a perfect fit."

The Museum is excited to offer a wide range of free or low-cost Educational & Community Programs inspired by this unique exhibition. Activities include [A History of Women's Achievements in America](#), a film series in honor of *Women's History Month* held in March; [Breakfast with BAM](#), a new monthly program designed to engage audiences in new conversations on art, craft and design; and several [Get Crafty Saturdays!](#), informal drop-in activities for children ages 4 - 12, among others.

*Beth Levine: First Lady of Shoes* is organized by **The Dutch Leather and Shoe Museum** and co-curated by Inge Specht and Helene Verin. The local presentation of this exhibition is made possible in part by **Nordstrom**.

**Bellevue Arts Museum** is the Pacific Northwest's center for the exploration of art, craft and design. **BAM** celebrates regional, national and international artists working in a broad range of craft media, including ceramics, fiber, metal, wood and glass. The Museum also offers a unique array of free or low-cost educational and community programs such as artist demonstrations, lectures and workshops as well as a variety of engaging and fun hands-on kids activities. The **Bellevue Arts Museum artsfair**, the largest and most prestigious arts event in the Pacific Northwest attracting over 350,000 visitors, is held annually in July. **BAM** is located in the heart of downtown Bellevue, provides free parking and is wheelchair accessible. [www.bellevuearts.org](http://www.bellevuearts.org)

For more information on this exhibit and other Museum-related programming, please contact Tanja Baumann (see contact information above).

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