



**PHILADELPHIA**  
UNIVERSITY

**News**

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**Celebrated Fashion Designer Nicole Miller to Receive  
2013 Spirit of Design Award at the Philadelphia University  
Fashion Show on Saturday, April 27**

***The gala event will take place at Philadelphia's historic Academy of Music  
as part of The Verizon Philadelphia University Evening of Innovation.***

PHILADELPHIA, March 13, 2013 – Celebrated fashion designer Nicole Miller will receive the 2013 Spirit of Design Award at the Philadelphia University Fashion Show on Saturday, April 27, at 6 p.m. at Philadelphia's historic Academy of Music.

Nicole Miller apparel and accessories are sold in her namesake boutiques around the world and at high-end retailers Neiman Marcus, Saks Fifth Avenue, Nordstrom and Bloomingdales. Her designs have been praised in the pages of *Vogue*, *W*, *Elle*, *InStyle* and numerous other publications, including *The New York Times*, which called Miller one of the leading female designers of her generation.

With a contemporary style that draws on a wide range of influences, Miller's designs are known for their whimsical prints and attention to perfect proportions and fit. A virtual who's who of Hollywood have worn Miller's designs, including celebrities Beyoncé, Jennifer Aniston, Halle Berry, Helen Hunt, Angelina Jolie, Cate Blanchett, Susan Sarandon, and Eva Longoria.

"Philadelphia University is pleased to present the 2013 Spirit of Design Award to Nicole Miller," said Clara Henry, director of the University's Fashion Design Program. "She connects with a broad range of customers, and her body-conscious designs are artfully shaped to best flatter a women's body."

"Nicole Miller also is known for developing innovative textiles for her collections and for her fanciful, bright prints for men's ties." Henry said. "She is an inspiration and role model for our students, who are the next generation of fashion designers, and we look forward to honoring her at the 2013 Fashion Show."

Miller earned a B.F.A. in apparel design from Rhode Island School of Design and studied at the École de la Chambre Syndicale de la Couture Parisienne in Paris, after which she served an apprenticeship with designer Clovis Ruffin. Miller later worked as head designer at P.J. Walsh before starting her eponymous company with Bud Konheim in 1982. The two have remained business partners since then and Konheim will receive a Leader of Innovation Medal as part of the Evening of Innovation program.

Over the years, Miller's success has expanded from apparel to wedding collections, home furnishings, fragrances, lingerie, swimwear, handbags and other lifestyle items. She was one of the first high-fashion designers to create collections for mass-market retail, collaborating with JCPenney and Bed, Bath and Beyond. She has presented her designs at New York Fashion Week every year since 1990.

Miller's first big hit came from an unlikely source. After opening her first boutique on Madison Avenue in New York, Miller and Konheim considered what to do with an underperforming silk dress with a theater tickets print. The answer: a men's tie, and Miller was able to make 36 of them with the fabric from the dresses—one of which she gave to Konheim as a present.

Meanwhile, a security guard at the boutique who also worked at the Metropolitan Opera showed one of the ties to the buyer at the opera gift shop, who showed up the next day to purchase the remaining 35 ties. Within two years, Miller was running a \$12 million a year tie business.

For more information on Miller, visit her website at [www.nicolemiller.com](http://www.nicolemiller.com).

The Spirit of Design Award is presented annually at the Philadelphia University Fashion Show to a prominent and influential designer. This prestigious award, first given in 2002 to renowned designer Geoffrey Beene, is presented to those who have made outstanding contributions to design and the fashion industry and who have served as inspirations to fashion design students and young designers.

Other awardees have included Tommy Hilfiger, whose preppy, trendy style is popular worldwide; acclaimed menswear designer John Varvatos; Francisco Costa, celebrated women's creative director of Calvin Klein Collection; Mary McFadden, known for her goddess-like couture gowns; and Philadelphia University Fashion Design alumni William Calvert, a couturier known for his exquisitely beautiful dresses and wedding gowns, and Jay McCarroll, the first winner of *Project Runway*.

Philadelphia University's Fashion Show, which is part of The Verizon *Philadelphia University Evening of Innovation*, is an annual event that showcases the best of each year's fabulous, colorful, creative and innovative student fashion designs. Each year, a sold-out crowd of some 2,300 students and their families, faculty members, designers and fashion and apparel industry professionals turn out for the professional runway show.

Tickets to the Philadelphia University Fashion Show are available at <http://kimmelcenter.org/events>. Media representatives should contact Debbie Goldberg, at [GoldbergD@philau.edu](mailto:GoldbergD@philau.edu) or 215-951-2718, for tickets.

Philadelphia University, founded in 1884, is a private university with 3,600 students enrolled in more than 60 undergraduate and graduate programs. As the model for professional university education, the University prepares students to be leaders in their professions in an active, collaborative and real-world learning environment infused with the liberal arts. Philadelphia University includes the innovative Kanbar College of Design, Engineering and Commerce; the College of Architecture and the Built Environment; and the College of Science, Health and the Liberal Arts. For more information, go to [www.PhilaU.edu](http://www.PhilaU.edu).