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**Fashion World Icon Leaves Retirement to Become Mentor to Vintage Merchants and Independent Designers**

CHICAGO, IL, April 7, 2010—Recently retired from a long and distinguished career at Saks Fifth Avenue and not one to rest, industry icon Nena Ivon has taken on a new role in the world of independent design and vintage fashion. Ivon will serve as Fashion Director of Randolph Street Market. Her first task— helping independent designers and vintage merchants succeed at Randolph Street Market’s (RSM) Modern Vintage Chicago April 17-18, 2010.

“Today people are interested in buying things that are different and in being more individual in how they are dressing,” Ivon says describing the brilliance of bringing together independent designers and vintage dealers for the event. “The result is a uniqueness that can’t be found anywhere else—and everyone wants something they can’t get somewhere else. I’m here to help those who provide it.”

From New York to Santa Monica, vintage and independent designer markets are known as the best place to find the unique, and Ivon wants to help make Chicago’s vintage market the best. With a sizable industry already in place, positioning the RSM as a fashion destination with the city’s independent designers at the center of this push, doesn’t seem like too tall an order.

“I’m proud of Chicago, and I like to think of it as not only the heart of America but also the heart of America’s fashion industry,” Ivon says noting that fashion tourists from around the world already frequently make their way to the city. “I’m in this position because I made it known that going to the Randolph Street Market is one of my favorite things to do in Chicago—and I want to share my enthusiasm.”

The longest-serving employee of Saks Fifth Avenue, Ivon has worked with dozens of top-name designers in the role of fashion director and manager of special events for the company. She also teaches three courses at Columbia College in Chicago including a history of modern fashion and fashion show production. That, combined with her new role as fashion director for Randolph Street Market, may seem like a lot to do in retirement, but taking on extra work is something Ivon is accustomed to.

“It’s just who I am,” Ivon says, happy she can turn her attention to independent design. “My goal is increased visibility for the clothing designers, to help them sell more.”

That help will come in the form of merchandising and promotion, and in reinforcing the show as a destination for unique design. To help accomplish that, Ivon says she'll be working to leverage the city's educational resources and even bring in top designers who can also benefit from the visibility at the market.

To some, the worlds of vintage fashion and new design might seem to be at odds, but Ivon says they make a perfect mix.

"A lot of people think you have to dress in vintage head to toe—you don't," she says explaining that the independent designers often cull vintage fashion." Fashions always come back in new designs, she says, but come back in different ways. "Sometimes vintage can look dated, but the best stuff always looks good. Chances are if it looks dated, it wasn't great design to begin with."

Ivon says she's been impressed by the quality at the Randolph Street Market but adds that sometimes good design isn't all that's needed to succeed. Part of her work is to instill the art of personal promotion.

"Designers can expect people to come to them—they usually won't. Even established designers have to make the effort to promote themselves," Ivon says. "Being visible and consciously promoting is what it's all about..."

"That, plus having fun, is why I'm here."

### **About Randolph Street Market Festival**

The Randolph Street Market Festival is home to the world-renowned Chicago Antique Market & Indie Designer Market and is the favorite destination for Hollywood set designers, as well as merchandisers, decorators, fashionista's and style setters from around the globe. This European-style indoor-outdoor market in the historic West Loop neighborhood features 200 select purveyors of high quality, beautifully-priced "finds" offering unlimited creative inspiration and hours of fun. For more information visit [www.randolphstreetmarket.com](http://www.randolphstreetmarket.com) or phone 312-666-1200.

