

# **NEWS BULLETIN** RE: **CLAIRE'S STORES, INC.**

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## **CLAIRE'S STORES APPOINTS KENNY WILSON AS PRESIDENT OF ITS EUROPEAN BUSINESS**

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## **MARK SMITH TO REMAIN AS KEY ADVISOR**

PEMBROKE PINES, FLORIDA, November 14, 2008 – Claire's Stores, Inc., a leading specialty retailer offering value-priced, fashion jewelry and accessories, today announced the appointment of Kenny Wilson, a proven retail executive with 20 years Pan-European experience, as President, Europe, reporting to Gene Kahn, CEO.

His predecessor, Mark Smith, who was instrumental in establishing Claire's presence in Europe, and rejoined the Company in May 2007 upon completion of the acquisition of the business by Apollo Management VI, L.P. and various affiliated entities, will remain an advisor to the Company's senior management focusing on global initiatives and key market development strategies.

In his position as President of Europe, Kenny will lead the growth and continued expansion of the European business. He will have direct responsibility for merchandising and operations for the more than 900 stores across ten countries, and will participate as a key leader within the Corporate Senior Management Team helping to establish short, mid and long term global direction. Kenny spent the last 18 years with the Levi Strauss Corporation, most recently as Senior Vice President Commercial Operations, Europe, and prior to that as President Levi's Brand, Europe. Kenny brings to this position a broad experience in fashion retailing, a track record of building a compelling consumer brand, and a history of successful results across Europe.

"Europe is an important contributor to Claire's revenue and profitability and represents our largest growth potential. We are pleased to add Kenny to the Claire's management team, given his impressive retail background, strong leadership skills, demonstrated people development capabilities and proven ability to develop and run a business throughout Europe," said Gene Kahn, CEO. "I am excited about the opportunity to work with Kenny, and the other members of the European Senior Management Team, as we plan for the acceleration of the European division, to make Claire's the dominant retailer of fashion accessories and costume jewelry in each of our key major markets. He will lead a recently created, world-class management team, based in Birmingham, U.K., with responsibility for Pan-Europe. This group of highly skilled and talented executives has already made significant progress with the implementation of our Pan European Transformation initiative."

“Kenny succeeds Mark Smith, who conceived the vision for a Pan-European business, assembled a world-class organization and worked diligently for the past 18 months to bring this initiative to fruition. I am pleased that Mark will remain with Claire’s as an advisor and I am confident that Kenny, as the new leader of our European business, will rise to the challenge by successfully leveraging his diverse management experience and building on the established foundation to maximize the European opportunity.”

Starting as a Graduate Trainee in 1987 with K Shoe Shops Limited, Kenny moved to the Burton Group as Merchandiser for the Top Shop brand. Kenny then joined Levi’s in 1990 as a Planning Manager, and was promoted frequently across various retail functions, culminating in 2005 when he assumed his present responsibilities. He successfully transformed and grew the European Division of the Levi’s business and opened in excess of 250 new stores during his tenure.

“I am very excited to be joining such an innovative specialty retail organization that is poised for future growth,” said Kenny Wilson. “Claire’s enjoys an outstanding reputation, and I look forward to working with Gene and Mark, as well as the full Claire’s European team, in bringing further distinction, results, and growth to what is already an exceptional retail organization.

Mark Smith will begin his advisory role in mid-February, 2009, after the benefit of a full month of transition working with Kenny, who assumes his responsibilities as President, Europe, on January 18<sup>th</sup>. Mark provided the energy and effort, along with a focused approach, to accomplish a great deal in a very short period of time. He recruited new talent and previous top performers to the business to build an experienced and driven European Senior Management Team. His vision for a unified division for all of Europe, conceived during the due diligence process, became a reality in July of this year and continues to evolve to meet Europe’s future needs.

“Mark served Claire’s Europe and its predecessor company in the U.K. for almost 18 years and was the driving force in building the business to its current leading market position,” remarked Gene Kahn. “Mark’s enthusiasm, passion and entrepreneurial spirit are extraordinary. His vision and commitment enabled us to realize, first in the late 1990’s, and again in the past 18 months, impressive financial results and significant accomplishments. We are fortunate that Mark will provide a transition and then will continue to work directly with myself and Jim Conroy, Executive Vice President of the Company, to implement change, seek growth opportunities and help improve our organizational effectiveness going forward.”

“I really enjoyed my time as the President of Europe, and the opportunity to work with such a talented team in Europe and globally. I believe firmly in the Claire’s concept and look forward to helping drive the Company’s future growth in my role as an advisor,” said Mark Smith. “I believe Kenny is an excellent choice to lead the European business and is a very good fit with our outstanding European team.”

## **Company Overview**

Claire's Stores, Inc. is a leading specialty retailer of value-priced jewelry and accessories for girls and young women through its two store concepts: Claire's® and Icing®. While the latter operates only in North America, Claire's operates worldwide. As of August 2, 2008, Claire's Stores, Inc. operated 3,053 stores in North America and Europe. Claire's Stores, Inc. also operates through its subsidiary, Claire's Nippon, Co., Ltd., 205 stores in Japan as a 50:50 joint venture with AEON, Co., Ltd. The Company also franchises 175 stores in the Middle East, Turkey, Russia, South Africa, Poland and Guatemala.

## **Forward-looking Statements**

This press release contains "forward-looking statements" which represent the Company's expectations or beliefs with respect to future events. Statements that are not historical are considered forward-looking statements. These forward-looking statements are subject to certain risks and uncertainties that could cause actual results to differ materially from those anticipated. Those factors include, without limitation: changes in consumer preferences and consumer spending; competition; general economic conditions such as inflation and increased energy costs; general political and social conditions such as war, political unrest and terrorism; natural disasters or severe weather events; currency fluctuations and exchange rate adjustments; uncertainties generally associated with the specialty retailing business; disruptions in our supply of inventory; inability to increase same store sales at historical rates; significant increases in our merchandise markdowns; inability to design and implement new information systems; delays in anticipated store openings or renovations; uncertainty that definitive financial results may differ from preliminary financial results due to, among other things, final GAAP adjustments; changes in applicable laws, rules and regulations, including changes in federal, state or local regulations governing the sale of our products, particularly regulations relating to the metal content in jewelry, and employment laws relating to overtime pay, tax laws and import laws; loss of key members of management; increases in the cost of labor; labor disputes; increases in the cost of borrowings; unavailability of additional debt or equity capital; and the impact of our substantial indebtedness on our operating income and our ability to grow. These and other applicable risks, cautionary statements and factors that could cause actual results to differ from the Company's forward-looking statements are included in the Company's filings with the SEC, specifically as described in the Company's Annual Report on Form 10-K for the fiscal year ended February 2, 2008 filed with the SEC on April 25, 2008. The Company undertakes no obligation to update or revise any forward-looking statements to reflect subsequent events or circumstances. The historical results contained in this press release are not necessarily indicative of the future performance of the Company.

## **Additional Information:**

Note: Other Claire's Stores, Inc. press releases, a corporate profile and the most recent Annual Report on Form 10-K and Form 10-Qs are available on Claire's business website at: <http://www.clairestores.com>.

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