

## For Immediate Release

Contact: Kelli Hernandez  
Insight Marketing Communications, Inc.  
(520) 280-7525 / kelli@insightfulconcepts.com

### **Northwest Florida Ballet Celebrates Ruby Anniversary, Accepts \$25,000 Federal Stimulus Grant**

October 14, 2009 – Fort Walton Beach, Fla. -- Carrying on the tradition of excellence established over the last 40 years, the Northwest Florida Ballet is celebrating this anniversary milestone with a highly anticipated season and looking toward a bright future.

Dance pioneer, Bernadette Clements, established the Fort Walton Beach Ballet in 1969, which changed its name to the Northwest Florida Ballet in 1987.

“When people told me it was impossible, I think something inside me just clicked and I set out to prove that I could,” Clements said of her dream to start the NFB. “I think there is no doubt that we have proved that you can.”

Over the last 40 years the semi-professional ballet company has presented 393 professional performances for an estimated 340,000 people, welcoming performers from around the world.

“Hundreds of dancers have had the opportunity to feel the thrill of performing on a stage, to take a ride on the music, to experience the excitement of an audience who really appreciates their performance,” Clements said.

Today, Artistic Director and CEO, Todd Eric Allen, is carrying on the vision created by Clements 40 years ago.

“In recognition of our Ruby Anniversary we want to reintroduce Northwest Florida to the Ballet,” Allen said. “The success of the Ballet’s first 40 years is a testament to the passion Bernadette Clements showed in turning her dream into reality. There is no way to measure the true impact of that dream on Fort Walton Beach and Northwest Florida, but those who have shared in the experience know that the impact is far reaching.”

In 2002 NFB joined with the Okaloosa County School System to establish the nationally recognized NFB Académie, a free public school for dance, which has enrolled a total of 450 students in its seven years. The Académie has been an A+ School since inception. NFB is the only dance company in the state of Florida that operates a successful public school on site.

To aid in the continuation of arts and education in the region, the NFB has been awarded a \$25,000 grant from Florida Arts Recovery Program through the Florida Department of State, Division of Cultural Affairs.



310 Perry Ave. SE  
Ft. Walton Beach, FL 32548

[www.nfballet.org](http://www.nfballet.org)

The highly coveted and intensely competitive grant is funded through the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act of 2009 and the National Endowment for the Arts. NFB is the only dance organization to be awarded the grant in the Northwest Florida region. The grant funding will provide salary assistance for the artistic faculty of the acclaimed Northwest Florida Ballet Académie.

Florida Secretary of State, Kurt S. Browning, has also recognized the continued excellence of the NFB and issued a proclamation making Nov. 21 and 22 Northwest Florida Ballet Days across the state.

For more information contact Kelli Hernandez at [kelli@insightfulconcepts.com](mailto:kelli@insightfulconcepts.com) or by phone at (520) 280-7525. Visit [nfballet.org](http://nfballet.org) for season information.

*The Northwest Florida Ballet celebrates its 40<sup>th</sup> year as a regionally recognized semi-professional ballet company and school. In addition, NFB has developed the nationally acclaimed Academie' – and integrated academic and dance education program serving 140 students from the third to eighth grade. The NFB is led by Artistic Director and CEO Todd Eric Allen, an area native. The NFB is funded in part by the Florida Arts Council.*

###

NORTHWEST FLORIDA

*Ballet*

310 Perry Ave. SE  
Ft. Walton Beach, FL 32548

[www.nfballet.org](http://www.nfballet.org)