



NEWS RELEASE

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**Contact: Carrie Sapp
Marketing Matters
512-804-1455
carrie@mmaustin.com**

REALITY WITH A WRIST-AND AN APPRENTICE TWIST

Local Austin Jeweler Teams Up with Swiss Army to Develop and Market an Officially Licensed University of Texas Longhorn Watch with the Help of University Students

**AUSTIN, Texas (June 23, 2005)
THE BIRTH OF THE CONCEPT**

Color has been known to spark emotion. Color has been known to spark ideas. When you bring the two together, you often create a phenomenon. Just think of the yellow “live strong” bracelets. Who would’ve ever thought that a simple concept with the color yellow would ignite a 47 million dollar charity machine? In the case of Monica and Hank Korman, it was a burnt orange shirt that sparked an idea that is sure to become a phenomenon in its own right.

At a watch conference in Las Vegas in April 2004, Russell Korman Fine Jeweler’s Hank and Monica Korman were visiting different booths when the burnt orange uniforms of the Swiss Army Watch employees caught their eye. “We immediately thought of home and the Longhorns,” explains Monica Korman. “Of course we had to say something to them about the color they were wearing and our Texas pride.”

Very coincidentally, Swiss Army was featuring their “base camp” watch style with a yellow band. On a whim and rather light-heartedly, the Korman’s joked that Swiss Army needed to make a watch with a burnt orange band. *You could almost see the fire ignite.*

This wasn’t just an off-hand comment. This was the birth of an idea for a new concept; a new product launch at Russell Korman Fine Jewelers. It was also the beginning of a very close relationship between the folks at Russell Korman and Swiss Army. “We worked hand and hand at designing what would become

the UT Swiss Army Longhorn Watch,” says Monica Korman, who single-handedly headed up the tedious process of licensing this product with the University. “We researched different watch styles that were already available and decided we wanted the design to look a little more sophisticated. We definitely wanted to keep the price down so that students could afford it, but we also wanted the watch style to appeal to the alumni of the University.”

Swiss Army was nothing but cooperative throughout the entire process. Licensing a product through the University requires patience and tenacity as the Korman’s discovered along the way. “You have to send prototypes of the watch for the approval process. We really changed the Swiss Army watch along the way,” says Korman. “We changed the watch face from black to white, took out military numbers and, of course, added the Longhorn logo. It truly was amazing how cooperative Swiss Army was of this process.”

They decided on two different styles—the burnt orange band and a bracelet style band. Swiss Army agreed to number the first one thousand watches of each style to create a “limited edition” product. Perhaps they were looking at the big picture just like the Korman’s were doing.

Finally, after over six months of paperwork, design and redesign, Russell Korman Fine Jewelry and Watches had a new product that they were incredibly proud of and ready to sell. Now what?

READY TO SELL

Most people believe that everything happens for a reason. Maybe it’s just a coincidence, but sometimes people are in our lives for a purpose. As it happens, University of Texas Marketing Professor Herb Miller is a loyal customer of the jewelry store and a longtime friend of owner Rusty Korman. They’ve often talked about working with his Marketing students at Texas, but there had never really been the perfect opportunity—until now. *Once again, the spark was lit.*

In a concept similar to the TV show “The Apprentice,” Monica Korman and Professor Miller designed a contest for the Marketing student’s final class project, only in this case, no one was fired for a bad idea! The contest involved dividing the class into different teams and developing a Marketing Campaign for the launch of the UT Swiss Army Longhorn Watch. Three teams worked on this Marketing Plan for six full weeks. In a labor of love, Monica Korman met with the teams on a weekly basis to answer questions about the project. “Sometimes students were afraid to ask questions around the other teams, but they would always stop me after class and talk privately,” she says. “I wanted to keep them excited about the project so I would bring food and presents for them each week. They became like my children and it was great to see them get as excited as I was. This project became very personal for me.” The ideas that they generated

would be put to use and the winning team received free watches, which provided even more incentive. Monica Korman, Russell Korman and a Swiss Army Representative were all on hand for the Final Presentations and all selected a unanimous group winner.

“All of the ideas were fascinating,” says Monica Korman. “The students have insight to so many Marketing avenues that we would’ve never thought of on our own like student-only websites, apartment complexes and Greek organizations. These are all great ways to infiltrate the student body of the University of Texas.”

Some ideas have already been put to practice. Russell Korman Fine Jewelry and Watches have worked with their Advertising Agency, Marketing Matters, over the last three months to really begin launching the watches to the public. Billboards can be seen in the campus area, radio commercials are running on the Longhorn Affiliate station, print ads are running in various Austin papers including “The Alcalde,” which is sent directly to Texas Alumni. Future plans include Marketing at University of Texas Home Games and launching a website for the watch for out-of-towners who want to special order their limited edition version.

Since the launch of the UT Swiss Army Longhorn Watch, Russell Korman has donated at least 17 watches to local charities including the recent Dennis Quaid Charity Golf Tournament and The UT Golf Tournament Benefiting the Rise School of Austin featuring James Street and Mac Brown.

Future plans include watches for other Universities. “We are licensed to develop watches for Baylor, Texas Tech, Rice and TCU right now,” says Monica. “The sky is really the limit.” In the meantime, they want to focus all their energies on selling the UT Swiss Army Longhorn Watch at Russell Korman Fine Jewelry and Watches. “We’re honored to be a part of the University of Texas Fever.”

The Limited Edition UT Swiss Army Longhorn Watches are available now at Russell Korman Fine Jewelry and Watches, 38th and Lamar, Austin, Texas. Please call the store at 512-451-9292 for details and questions or visit www.longhornwatch.com.

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