

# U.S. Trial Starts In Ballet Sex Case

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**The  Moscow Times**

A U.S. lawyer and arts philanthropist has gone on trial in Philadelphia on charges that he sexually abused a Russian ballet dancer he helped support.

Kenneth Schneider began a relationship with Roman Zavarov in 1998, when the boy was 12, prosecutors said, RIA-Novosti [reported](#). They say he paid for the boy's ballet school and had him move into his Moscow apartment.

Zavarov, who is currently a dancer for Ballet Arizona, said Schneider used “pressure and coercion” to force him into relationship, the report said. He also said he did not resist Schneider's advances because he could not afford ballet education otherwise.

Schneider has denied all charges.

Defense lawyer Joseph Green Jr. tried unsuccessfully to get the charges dismissed on statute-of-limitation grounds ahead of the start of the trial Tuesday.

Schneider, 45, has been in custody since being detained in March in Cyprus. He is the founder of the Apogee Foundation, a New York-based arts group, and has worked for a number

companies, including a finance firm owned by Roman Abramovich, RIA-Novosti said, without identifying the firm.

Schneider is also accused of bringing Zavarov to Philadelphia for a 2001 summer program and continuing the sexual relationship for several years after that.

*(AP, MT)*

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