

# **FRIENDS of the BARNES FOUNDATION**

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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **First Public Debate about the Future of the Barnes Foundation to be held at Drexel University Monday, May 21**

Two prominent area luminaries will meet Monday, May 21 to debate the future of the Barnes Foundation and the controversial plan to move the art collection from the world-renowned Barnes Foundation in Merion to a site on the Benjamin Franklin Parkway in Philadelphia.

Robert Zaller, professor of history at Drexel University and a member of Friends of the Barnes Foundation, which seeks to preserve an intact Barnes Foundation in Merion, and Gresham Riley, former president of the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, will lead the debate. Robert Morscheck, Professor of Art History at Drexel University, will moderate.

The plan to move the art collection was developed by three major foundations: The Pew Charitable Trusts, the Annenberg Foundation, and the Lenfest Foundation. The three organizations funded the legal proceedings in Montgomery County Orphans' Court in 2004 that resulted in breaking Albert Barnes' Indenture of Trust and orchestrated the campaign to raise \$150 million for the project. In addition to the funding raised by the foundations, a \$100 million appropriation for capital spending on the project was passed in the Pennsylvania Senate in 2002, two years before the court decision. When released, state funds for the construction project will have to be matched by the City of Philadelphia.

Zaller and Riley have sparred on the Barnes issue in *The Broad Street Review* ([www.broadstreetreview.com](http://www.broadstreetreview.com)), a cultural arts Web site founded by journalist Dan Rottenberg, but the Drexel event will be the first time the two have directly faced off in a debate. Drexel's College of Arts and Sciences and the Art Club of the College of Media, Art and Design are sponsoring the event.

The event will run from 6-7:50 p.m. at Drexel University, Stein Auditorium, 111 Nesbitt Hall, at 33<sup>rd</sup> and Market streets in Philadelphia. Admission is free and the public is urged to attend this important exchange of ideas on the future of the Barnes Foundation. For further information, please call 610-667-0281.

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