

FRIENDS of the BARNES FOUNDATION

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MEDIA ADVISORY/PHOTO OPPORTUNITY PROTEST TODAY AT BARNES FOUNDATION – 10 AM

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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FRIENDS OF THE BARNES PROTEST DECEPTION AND BACK-ROOM DEALS THAT THREATEN DEATH OF A UNIQUE AMERICAN VISION

(MERION STATION, PA, U.S.A. – July 2, 2011) **Friends of the Barnes Foundation** members will gather at the Barnes gates today **at 10 am**. On the closing day of the Merion galleries, the organization wants to draw attention to the flawed legal process and deceptive practices involved in the plan to dismantle the historic Barnes complex in Merion. Public perceptions on the move are based largely on misleading information fostered by the current Barnes administration and others motivated by commercial and political interests, including Pew Charitable Trusts, the Lenfest Foundation, and the Annenberg Foundation.

Facts:

- The Barnes in Merion **never applied to the Township to increase visitation by the public**. A community group led by Barnes neighbors Nancy and Walter Herman applied for and obtained Zoning Ordinance changes that more than tripled the potential number of visitors with additional allowances for school groups. Through its restrictive policies, the current administration has never maximized accessibility and yet it continues to dishonestly blame the Township.
- During the period from 2000 to 2006, the Barnes Foundation had an **average annual operating deficit of less than \$200,000**. (Source: Barnes Foundation IRS returns.) With its small budget, its international significance as an educational institution, historic site, and tourism venue, the Barnes in Merion is financially sustainable. No studies have ever been undertaken proving that the massive and expensive Parkway facility will be sustainable. The huge financial resources that will be needed to support it are greatly needed by other, existing institutions.

- The Barnes in Merion is much more than an art collection. It is a historic and cultural resource of immense value, as shown by its eligibility for **National Historic Landmark** status and the **National Register of Historic Places**. Removal of the art collection destroys those eligibilities.
- The Merion gallery building underwent a total renovation of its physical plant at a cost of \$12 million. The work included special UV protection on the windows. All mechanical, environmental, and security systems were replaced by Venturi, Scott Brown Associates. **The systems in the Merion gallery building are of the highest museum standard.**
- The thick blinds covering the gallery windows are completely unnecessary and detract much from the viewing experience. **The reduction in lighting serves the interests of the current administration to justify the transfer of the art collection to Philadelphia.**

Friends of the Barnes Foundation filed a petition in February asking Montgomery County Orphans' Court to re-open hearings on the matter, citing numerous ways the Court was misled in previous hearings. On **August 1**, West Chester, PA attorney **Samuel C. Stretton** will present the case in **Oral Arguments** before Judge Ott.

Friends of the Barnes Foundation is an organization of citizen advocates whose mission is the permanent preservation of the Barnes Foundation in Merion, a nationally significant cultural and historic site of art, architecture, and horticultural bequeathed to the people of the world by Albert and Laura Barnes. For more information, visit <http://www.barnesfriends.org>

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