

# FRIENDS of the BARNES FOUNDATION

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### Barnes Board of Trustees to Respond to Friends of the Barnes, Montco Petitions this Friday

(MERION – October 17, 2007) On Friday, October 19 at 9:30 a.m. in Courtroom 10, current members of the Barnes Foundation Board of Trustees and Pennsylvania Attorney General Tom Corbett are due to respond to petitions filed by Friends of the Barnes Foundation and Montgomery County by the order of Montgomery County Orphans' Court Judge Stanley R. Ott.

The appearance will be the first opportunity to witness the impact of the grass-roots campaign to save the Barnes Foundation waged since 2004 by Friends of the Barnes Foundation. From its modest beginning as a Steering Committee of 12 citizens from the Philadelphia region and New York City, the organization has grown to several thousand members from around the country and overseas.

Interest in the preservation of the renowned Barnes Foundation has intensified since the 2004 ruling that granted permission for its Board of Trustees to move the Barnes art collection from Merion to a site 5.5 miles away in Philadelphia. Many new issues have emerged since 2004, including:

- Previously unknown public funding of the move. \$107 million was secretly appropriated in the Pennsylvania capital spending bill of 2002 for “construction of a building to house the Barnes art collection in Philadelphia”. This was not mentioned during the hearings of 2004.

- Greater access in Merion. Although visitation to the Barnes Foundation can be increased to 140,000 immediately, the current Barnes Board has not made any change in attendance policies and yet continues to cite “accessibility” as a reason for the move.
- Financial stability in Merion. The Montgomery County Board of Commissioners has proposed a \$50 million bond-lease back arrangement to the Barnes Foundation to provide financial stability for the institution.
- National Historic Landmark status. The Barnes Foundation, in its entirety, has been deemed eligible to apply for National Historic Landmark status, the highest honor for significant cultural sites in the United States and with potential for additional funding. The current Barnes Board has not applied for this designation.
- Regional perspective for cultural sites. Numerous area cultural organizations and public officials have expressed a desire for regionalism to distribute both resources for and benefits of the area’s cultural sites. An ideal starting point for development of a true regional arts approach is the Barnes Foundation site and an arts shuttle for the twelve-minute ride from the Parkway to Merion.

In anticipation of the Friday court appearance, Friends of the Barnes Foundation member Margot Flaks said, “I feel very thankful that Judge Ott has afforded himself and the public this opportunity to stop and review the situation of the Barnes Foundation. Many things that were not so obvious before have been brought to the forefront and there is much good that can come from this. I feel more hopeful than ever that the Barnes Foundation can be saved so that everyone can benefit from the magnificent gift that Dr. Barnes left to the world as he designed and intended it.” Friends of the Barnes attorney, Mark D. Schwartz, of Bryn Mawr, looks forward to the proceedings, saying, “There is no reason that the Barnes Foundation cannot not remain in Merion except that its current Board of

Trustees is exclusively motivated to move the art collection to Philadelphia. In taking that stance, the universally-accepted role of Trustee is turned on its head, because it is now perfectly clear that a move would place the Barnes Foundation at grave risk, whereas embracing it in its historic site offers stability, security, and respect for Albert Barnes's life's work.”

For further information, visit the Friends of the Barnes Foundation website at

<http://www.barnesfriends.org>

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