

# **FRIENDS of the BARNES FOUNDATION**

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## **FRIENDS OF THE BARNES FOUNDATION SAYS DRPA CONTRIBUTION CONFIRMS BARNES MOVE AS A PORK BARREL PROJECT**

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(MERION STATION, Aug. 18) Members of Friends of the Barnes Foundation will speak at today's meeting of the Delaware River Port Authority about the \$500,000 donation the agency gave to the Barnes move project. The group points to the contribution as confirmation that the Barnes project is a creature of backroom deals and pork barrel politics for which DRPA and Pennsylvania Governor Ed Rendell are widely known. The Friends maintain that the Governor has repeatedly used his office to manipulate conditions favorable to the Barnes move while dismissing clear evidence that the Barnes complex in Merion is a financially sustainable site of the highest national historic and cultural significance.

Signs of political maneuvering that cloud the DRPA allocation and the Barnes project include:

- The Barnes project does not meet the DRPA's own criteria for such projects, as defined in the agency's own Guidelines.
- The DRPA has not conducted any studies to determine whether the Barnes project is financially sustainable. Experts have written that the project is highly risky.
- The DRPA has not studied possible negative economic impacts of the Barnes project on the existing cultural resources, including the historic Barnes complex in Merion as well as other institutions.
- The Barnes project allocation was approved in January 2003, almost two years before the Montgomery Orphans' Court gave permission for the move.

- Governor Rendell and former Attorney General D. Michael Fisher used their offices and \$80 million to neutralize opposition to the Barnes move from former Barnes stewards, Lincoln University.
- Governor Rendell pledged \$30 million for the Barnes project from a previously unknown 2002 appropriation of \$107 million from Pennsylvania taxpayers. Montgomery County Orphans' Court Judge Stanley Ott, who gave permission for the Barnes move in 2004, was not told about the state funding.
- According to a published account, "Behind the Barnes Bonanza," by David D'Arcy, a number of Trustees of the Barnes Foundation and other major players in the project have made significant contributions to the political campaign of Governor Rendell.

Friends of the Barnes Foundation Steering Committee member Evelyn Yaari reflected on the Commission's actions, saying, "Donation of half a million dollars to the region's most controversial project speaks volumes. The motivations to move the Barnes have nothing to do with art and culture and everything to do with backroom deals and pork barrel politics. Anyone with a shred of respect for Pennsylvania taxpayers and respect for fundamental integrity can see how outrageous this is."

Friends of the Barnes Foundation advocates permanent preservation of the Barnes Foundation, schools for art appreciation and horticulture, whose tools include the Barnes collection of art and ethnographic objects and a 130-year-old arboretum in Merion, Pennsylvania. Additional information is available at <http://www.barnesfriends.org>

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