

FRIENDS of the BARNES FOUNDATION

Post Office Box 35, Merion Station, Pennsylvania 19066

e-mail: barnesfriends@comcast.net; www.barnesfriends.org; 610-667-0281

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For information: Nancy Herman 610-667-0281 or barnesfriends@comcast.net

FRIENDS OF THE BARNES FOUNDATION HAIL MONTANA'S SUPREME COURT DECISION; SEEKS SIMILAR JUSTICE FOR BARNES

(MERION STATION, May 1) While awaiting the decision of Montgomery County Orphans' Court Judge Stanley Ott to re-open hearings on the fate of the Barnes Foundation, Friends of the Barnes Foundation members are heartened by news of a stunning victory for champions of the Bair Museum in Montana. As reported by the *New York Times* (April 30, 2008), Montana's Supreme Court dismissed the board of the Charles M. Bair Family Museum in Martindale, Montana for breaching its fiduciary responsibility. Although the Barnes is not a museum, concerns about fiduciary responsibility of its Board of Trustees and oversight by the state Attorney General are at the core of the Friends' petition filed in August of 2007. The Board is accused of putting the planned removal of the Barnes art collection as the highest priority, dismissing alternatives that would permanently preserve the Merion cite. The financial woes that purportedly created the motivation for the move from Merion to Philadelphia have been discredited.

In a striking contrast to the Montana case, which had the support of the state Attorney General, Mike McGrath, and thirteen other attorneys general, Pennsylvania's Attorney General Corbett has steadfastly supported the dismantling of the Barnes art collection, refusing numerous requests to re-examine the matter despite issues of conflicted stewardship, secret legislative action, conflicts of interest, and changed circumstances. The latest request to the Attorney General came from U.S. Representative Jim Gerlach in a letter dated April 14, 2008.

The Friends of the Barnes Foundation mission to preserve the world-renowned Merion complex in its entirety as a site of national historic and cultural significance has been taken up by citizens around the country and abroad, and public officials at the local and federal level. For more information, visit the Friends of the Barnes Foundation website at <http://www.barnesfriends.org>

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