

# FRIENDS OF THE BARNES FOUNDATION

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## FACT SHEET

Friends of the Barnes Foundation is an organization of citizen advocates for the preservation of the Barnes Foundation in Merion. We recognize that the Barnes art collection has moved and the new facility is about to open and see this as an important time for review. The work of the Friends to educate the public about the history of this institution and struggle over its fate will continue.

- **The public is not being offered the gift left by Albert Barnes**, but a piece of the Barnes gift most vulnerable to **commercial exploitation**. The Barnes gift was one thing only – the indivisible complex in Merion: the art collection, the purpose-built gallery building, and the surrounding 13-acre arboretum. Not at all the vision of Dr. Barnes, the Parkway Barnes is a perversion of the wishes of a generous benefactor by politically-connected wealthy elites.
- The removal of the Barnes art collection from its purpose-built gallery building in Merion is the destruction of an existing asset; an irreplaceable cultural site of national significance, eligible to be a **National Historic Landmark** if it had remained intact.
- The legal process by which the move was achieved was not a fair adversarial proceeding, as all parties participating with legal standing were already in support of the move, severely limiting the scope of evidence presented to the Court. **The Barnes Trust had no advocate with standing in the proceedings.**
- In more recent legal action, **Friends of the Barnes Foundation's 2011 Court Petition** was denied by **Judge Stanley Ott**, who imposed sanctions of \$25,000 on the Friends and individual petitioners. **An Appeal has been filed in Superior Court by Barnes Watch and Samuel C. Stretton, Esquire.**
- The reasons originally given for the “necessity” of the move –**access** and financial **sustainability** – have been discredited by careful analysis. It is obvious that there were additional sources for revenue, including more than tripling admission ticket prices since 2004.

- **Access** to the collection in Merion was limited *not* by the Township of Lower Merion, but by the refusal of the Barnes Board to apply for a zoning ordinance change. A citizens' group sought and won a zoning ordinance change to permit significantly increased access, but the Barnes Board took no steps to implement the changes. With the zoning ordinance changes, the Merion site would have been permitted to have at least 144,000 visitors annually plus tens of thousands of school students. This is approximately the estimate of visitors to the Parkway after the initial period of a year or two after the opening.
- The **neighbors** of the Barnes Foundation did not sue the Barnes Foundation and were not hostile. The repeated vilification of the neighbors is unfair and inaccurate, but has been dishonestly used as a justification for the move.
- The Friends commissioned an **Analysis** of the Barnes Financial Statements by **Professors Troy Janes and Professor emeritus Mati Marcus**, of Rutgers University, whose areas of expertise includes bankruptcy and institutions in financial distress. Their analysis shows that the Barnes Foundation was not near bankruptcy and that there were opportunities that could have brought the Barnes in Merion to **long-term robust financial status**.
- The Barnes is now an institution with far greater financial needs, impacting other regional institutions that depend upon public and private funding. It is worth noting that during Court proceedings, the Parkway Barnes project was described as being funded by private philanthropy. Ultimately, **Pennsylvania taxpayers** are the single largest donors, with almost **\$50 million** coming from the state Treasury, proceeds of a bond (borrowed funds).
- There is tremendous excitement about the Parkway Barnes, but this is the brainchild of those able to exert influence who have a short-term, expediency-oriented mentality. The public was not involved in any part of the process and there was no transparency or debate.
- Friends of the Barnes Foundation remains concerned about the long-term consequences of the move. In addition to the financial risks, the move violates several of our most prized values, including donor intent, stewardship of resources, our shared cultural heritage, and the integrity of the authentic over "replication."

Further information is available on the Friends of the Barnes Foundation website, [barnesfriends.org](http://barnesfriends.org) and [savethebarnes.org](http://savethebarnes.org)