

To the Editor:

To assert that "some of the same people" who wanted the Barnes to remain as Dr. Barnes intended in the 1990's are still fighting to keep it that way today should not be a surprise to anyone, but to blame them for the financial mismanagement that led to the draining of the endowment of the foundation, as Phyllis Beck does in her (Feb. 14) letter to the Main Line Times, is unjust in the extreme. The Barnes Foundation's lawyers and managers embarked on a scurrilous federal lawsuit, which defamed the neighbors and the township. They spent over \$3 million dollars in an attempt to avoid paying the fees of the neighbors' lawyers. These fees totaled less than six figures at the time they were awarded by the court when it found the suit to be "cynical and frivolous." That was certainly "legal wrangling," but it was not instituted by the neighbors, but the foundation itself.

The Barnes has hired Ms. Beck to defend indefensible positions, so it is not surprising that her response to questions concerning the reasons the foundation is not opening the galleries in Merion to more visitors when they claim to be moving in order to give more access to the collection is a little desperate. To resort to this sort of distortion would seem to be beneath the dignity of a former jurist.

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Merion