

FRIENDS of the BARNES FOUNDATION

7615 St. Martin's Lane, Philadelphia, PA 19118

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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 22, 2013

For information: Evelyn Yaari 610-864-6483 eyaari@comcast.net or
Nancy Herman 610-667-0281 barnesfriends@comcast.net

DR. BARNES EXHIBIT REMOVED. NO PLANS IN PLACE TO ACKNOWLEDGE GENEROUS BENEFACTOR, EDUCATOR

(PHILADELPHIA, PA, U.S.A. – March 22, 2013) **Barnes Watch** and **Friends of the Barnes Foundation** have written to protest the recent dismantling of the exhibition about **Dr. Albert C. Barnes** at the Philadelphia museum. There are no plans at this time for a permanent display about Dr. Barnes and the history of his foundation. The exhibition *Ensemble: Albert C. Barnes and the Experiment in Education* had been located in the 5,000 square foot temporary exhibition space in the Parkway building since the opening of the building in May of 2012. It was removed in preparation for installation of work by American artist **Ellsworth Kelly**.

A **letter** of protest from Barnes Watch President Evelyn Yaari was addressed to Barnes Executive Director **Derek Gillman**, objecting to the absence of any reference to the historic significance of the Merion complex where Dr. Barnes' revolutionary program for art appreciation originated.

The situation appears to contradict a **May 2011 letter** from Barnes Foundation's Legal Counsel, the late **Brett I. Miller**, Esquire to Pennsylvania Historic and Museum Commission Director **Jean Cutler**. In that letter, Mr. Miller wrote of "furthering our educational mission and expanding public awareness of the history and importance of the

Foundation's Merion location in a manner that preserves and respects its historic integrity." and "...our sensitivity to the historic importance of the Merion campus." Mr. Miller also wrote, "We strongly believe that these plans...will all serve to increase public awareness of the history and importance of the Merion facility..."

The Friends' advocacy for preservation has long pointed to the Merion site's importance as a site of American cultural heritage, a position based on an **Assessment** of the Barnes Foundation as a National Historic Landmark, published in 2007. If the site had remained intact, it would have been eligible for National Historic Landmark status.

The Friends' letter also objects to the absence of any visible acknowledgement at the Philadelphia facility of Albert C. Barnes as founder of the Barnes Foundation as a progressive innovator in the field of arts education and one of the most generous benefactors in American history. Friends of the Barnes Foundation Steering Committee member **Suzanne Hunter** asks "Is Dr. Barnes going to be plowed under so soon? Removal of the collection from Merion already neutralized its power and meaning. The very least they can do is put up a permanent display about Dr. Barnes, the ideals that inspired him, and his unmatched generosity. Besides the obvious ethical necessity, it would enrich the experience of visitors and distinguish the place from being just another art museum."

Friends of the Barnes Foundation is an organization of citizen advocates dedicated to recognition of the Barnes Foundation in Merion, Pennsylvania as a site of our shared cultural heritage, the generous gift of Albert C. Barnes.

For more information, visit www.barnesfriends.org
