

FRIENDS of the BARNES FOUNDATION

P. O. Box 35 Merion Station, PA 19066 www.barnesfriends.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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National Park Service Willing to Consider Nomination of the Barnes Foundation for National Historic Landmark Status

(MERION STATION, PA – Aug. 8. 2007) The National Historic Landmarks Program of the National Park Service has responded to the preliminary assessment of the Barnes Foundation as an applicant for National Historic Landmark status, saying that the body would “be pleased to consider the NHL eligibility of this resource (the Barnes Foundation).”

Consideration of the Barnes Foundation as a National Historic Landmark resulted from an overview assessment commissioned by Friends of the Barnes Foundation, the citizens’ organization dedicated to preservation of the Barnes Foundation in Merion.

The assessment of the Barnes Foundation recognizes that the art collection, gallery building and arboretum are a unified whole, integrated with the educational purpose of the Barnes Foundation.

That understanding of the Barnes Foundation as a unified whole is also reflected in the National Historic Landmarks Program response, which states: “The property appears to have significance as the physical evocation of an approach to art education put into tangible practice by owner Albert Barnes...An approach for the nomination that remains centered on the educational

significance of the Barnes will also provide for a more satisfying and integrated presentation of the intangible ideas, the building and its landscape, and the diverse art collection and its management and display.”

The process of nomination and review for National Historic Landmark status requires the property owner’s support. Friends of the Barnes member Sandra Bressler has written to Bernard Watson, President of the Barnes Board of Trustees seeking his support for pursuing the nomination and offering the Friends’ assistance to fund the nomination process.

Speaking about the encouraging response from the Landmarks Program, Ms. Bressler said, “National Historic Landmark status is the highest level of cultural and historical significance conferred by the United States government. It carries the clear message that this site is important to all Americans. We hope that the Trustees of the Barnes Foundation will embrace this opportunity to preserve a national treasure. The Barnes is much more than an art collection. It is a site-specific historic and cultural monument as well.”

The Friends of the Barnes letter to Bernard Watson appears below. For more information, visit the Friends of the Barnes Foundation website at <http://www.barnesfriends.org>

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Post Office Box 35 Merion, Pennsylvania 19066

August 8, 2007

Bernard C. Watson, Ph.D.
President of the Board of Trustees
The Barnes Foundation
300 N. Latch’s Lane
Merion, PA 19066

Dear Dr. Watson:

We are delighted to share some wonderful news with you. Friends of the Barnes Foundation commissioned an overview assessment to evaluate whether the Barnes Foundation is eligible for National Historic Landmark status under the National Register of Historic Places and National Historic Landmarks Program of the National Park Service in the United States Department of the Interior. The assessment recognizes that the art collection, gallery building and arboretum are a unified whole that is integrated with the educational purpose of the Barnes Foundation.

As you probably know, National Historic Landmark status is the highest level of cultural and historical significance conferred by the U.S. government and signifies that the property is important to all Americans. The landmark designation opens up funding opportunities that are otherwise unavailable.

Friends of the Barnes Foundation submitted the assessment to the National Historic Landmarks Program and received an encouraging response which includes the following language:

The property appears to have significance as the physical evocation of an approach to art education put into tangible practice by owner Albert Barnes. We would be pleased to consider the NHL eligibility of this resource under Criterion 1.... An approach for the nomination that remains centered on the educational significance of the Barnes will also provide for a more satisfying and integrated presentation of the intangible ideas, the building and its landscape, and the diverse art collection and its management and display.

We invite your participation to work on this important project. If funding of this is a problem, Friends of the Barnes Foundation is willing to assume all costs and undertakings associated with the nomination process. All that is required from you is simply a letter of support.

We thank you for your attention and look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely yours,

Sandra Bressler, Ph.D.
for Friends of the Barnes Foundation

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