

FRIENDS of the BARNES FOUNDATION

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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SAM STRETTON TO ARGUE FRIENDS' CASE BEFORE JUDGE OTT ON AUGUST 1

(NORRISTOWN, PA, U.S.A. – June 9, 2011) Montgomery County Orphans' Court Judge Stanley R. Ott issued an order on June 6, 2011 ordering Oral Arguments in the Barnes Foundation matter on **Monday, August 1, 2011 at 1 pm** in Courtroom 14, 4th floor in Norristown, Pennsylvania.

Samuel C. Stretton, Esq. will argue on behalf of citizen advocacy groups **Friends of the Barnes Foundation** and **BarnesWatch** who have long sought permanent preservation of the historic Barnes Foundation complex established by Albert C. Barnes in Lower Merion Township. Mr. Stretton petitioned Montgomery County Orphans' Court in February asking that hearings be re-opened based on new evidence that the Court had been misled in earlier hearings. That petition cites statements made by **former Attorney General Michael Fisher** in the documentary **"The Art of the Steal"** confirming what can be construed as threats Mr. Fisher made toward the Board of Lincoln University. At the time, Lincoln appointed four out of five Barnes Board members and was the only party other than the Pennsylvania Attorney General with legal standing to intervene. Following Mr. Fisher's threatening stance, Lincoln dropped their petition opposing the Barnes Foundation's petition to change its

By Laws. By doing that, Lincoln abdicated its control of the Barnes Board, paving the way for the transfer of the Barnes art collection to a tourism facility in Philadelphia. Mr. Stretton argues that because of those activities and the fact that the Court was never made aware them, the role of the Pennsylvania Attorney General as *parens patriae* for charities in the Barnes case lost its validity. The Friends' petition maintains that had the Court known of the actions by the Attorney General, standing for the Friends et al. could have been established and can now be established under the **Private Attorney General Theory**.

Mr. Stretton will also refute claims that the Barnes Foundation was not and is not financially sustainable in Merion. He will cite evidence showing that information presented in earlier hearings was incomplete and inaccurate. Objective analysis will be cited that points to long-term sustainability of the Barnes as an unparalleled site of international cultural significance that can thrive with a modest operating budget and significant fund-raising potential in its historic Merion setting.

Documents related to the case are available on the website of Friends of the Barnes Foundation at http://www.barnesfriends.org/files/legal_matters.html

Mr. Stretton can be reached through his West Chester, Pennsylvania office at 610-696-4243.

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