

FRIENDS OF THE BARNES FOUNDATION

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MEDIA ADVISORY

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Press Conference to be Held Minutes before Barnes Foundation Groundbreaking Travesty

\$200m Parkway Barnes Project Will Waste Taxpayer Funds, Cripple Local Arts Funding for Years

- DATE:** Friday, Nov. 13, 2009
- TIME:** 9:30 AM
- LOCATION:** Benjamin Franklin Parkway at 20th Street
- EVENT:** Press conference held by Friends of the Barnes Foundation, a non-profit organization opposed to moving the Barnes Foundation. The press conference will be held at the site of Friday's 10:00 AM ground breaking for the proposed future site of the Parkway Barnes.
- PHOTO OP:** Barnes Foundation advocates and Pennsylvania residents concerned about government spending will present banners denouncing the unconscionable waste of tax dollars for the pork barrel project.
- DETAILS:** Barnes advocates will present opposition to the vast waste of public and private resources on the unnecessary and extravagant \$200 million Parkway Barnes project. The project seeks to move the Barnes Foundation from its current 12-acre site in Merion to a four-acre site on the Benjamin Franklin Parkway – a distance of less than five miles. Funded by the State of Pennsylvania, the Pew Charitable Trusts, the Lenfest and Annenberg Foundations, and Aramark CEO Joseph Neubauer, construction costs estimated at \$100 million in 2004 have already soared to \$150 million and the proposed endowment has been slashed from \$100 million to \$50 million, calling into question whether the project is economically viable. Overall funding for the project to date has remained virtually unchanged at \$150 million since 2006.
- The proposed expenditure comes at a time when State funding for the arts has been slashed to a tiny fraction of previous levels and non-profit institutions in the region are reporting unheard-of drops in corporate and private donor support. Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance Peggy Amsterdam announced last month, "In my thirty-five years, I've never seen it so tough." The project has been denounced in Philadelphia and around the world as everything from an "indiscrete and ridiculous waste of money..." (architect Robert Venturi) to "a crime" (Nicolai Ouroussoff in *The New York Times*).
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