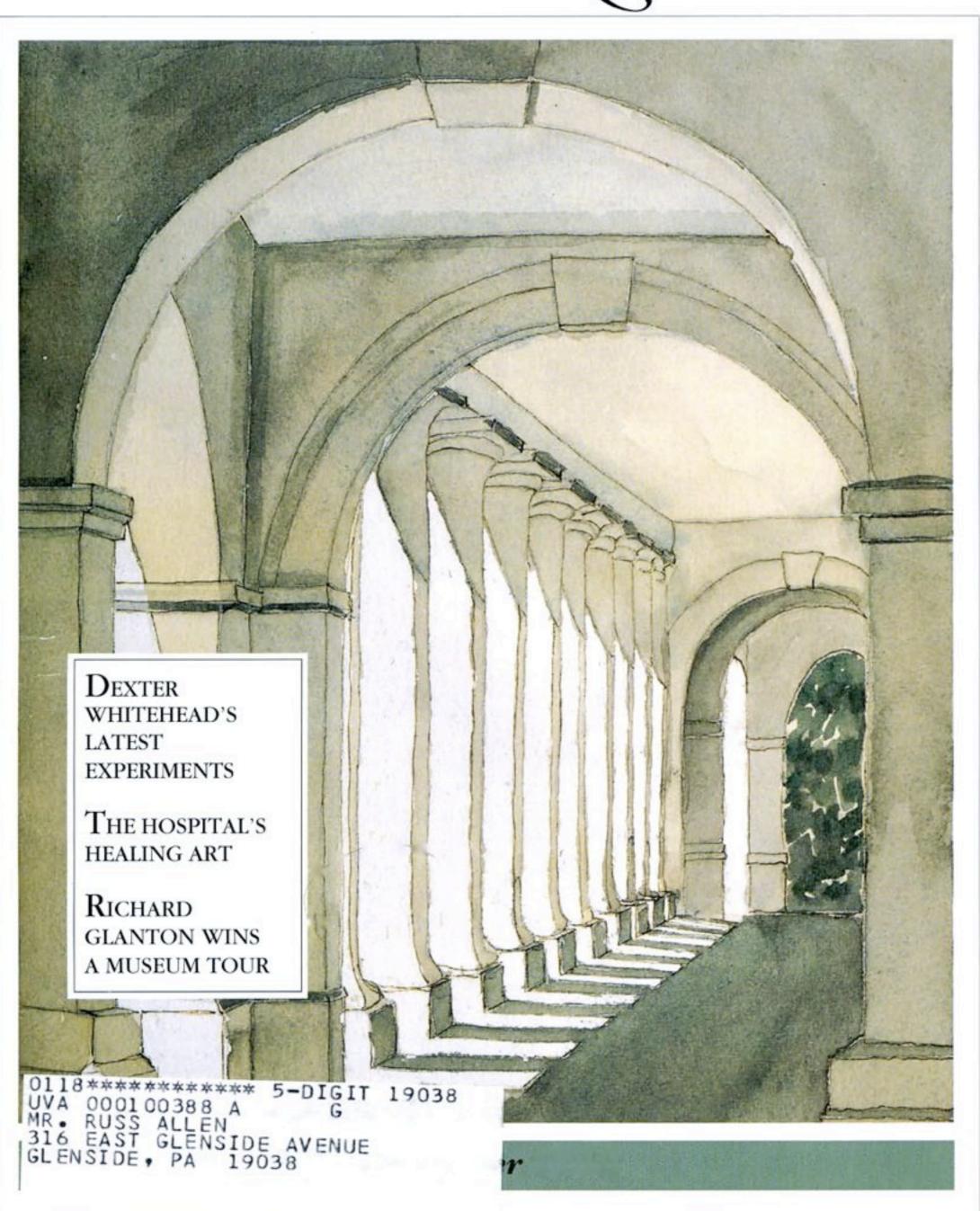
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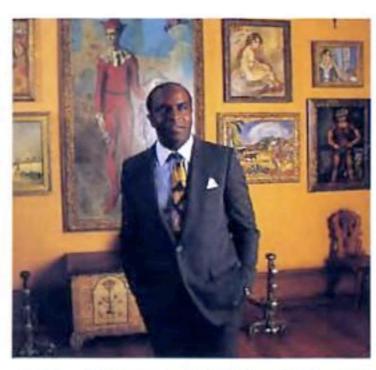
VIRGINIA Alumni News



Volume LXXX No.6



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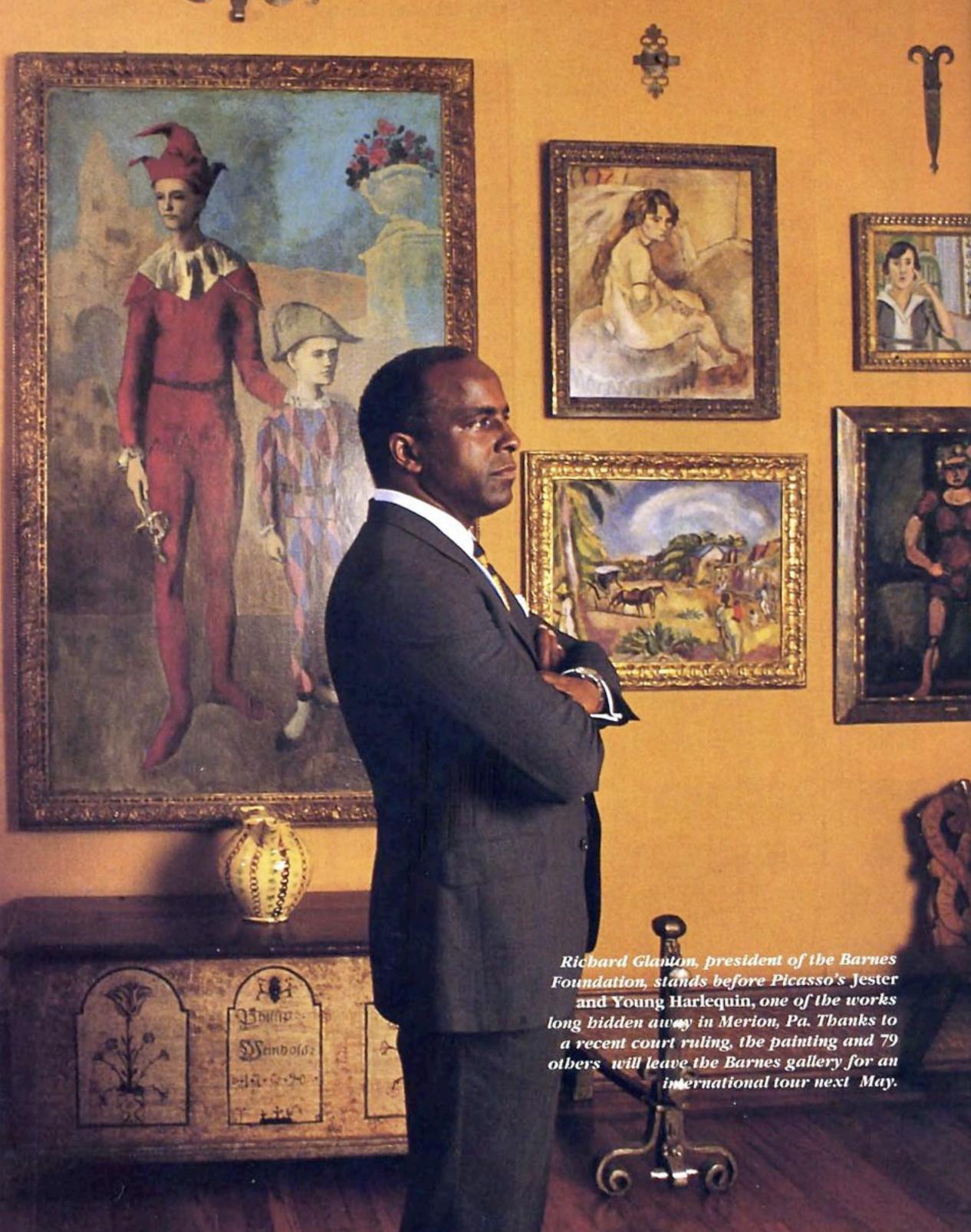
150 YEARS

OF SERVICE

CONTRIBUTING WRITRS: Marguerite Beck, Robert Brickhouse, Anne Bromley, Louise Dudley, Thomas Doran, Katherine Johnson, Michael Marshall, Anne Oplinger and Ida Lee Wootten.

SPECIAL CONTRIBUTORS: Russ Allen (Col '81), Paula Peters (Col '89), Kathleen Valenzi (Col '87) and Julie Young (Col '77).

coppo



A LAW ALUMNUS LEADS THE CHARGE TO PLACE A GREAT ART COLLECTION BEFORE THE WORLD

The Devil & Richard Glanton

BY RUSS ALLEN

For two years now, Richard Glanton (Law '72) has been on the front line in perhaps the hottest struggle in the art world. This spring, as point man in the controversy, he was obliged to make one of the most dramatic accusations of art theft in recent times. He also has launched what is perhaps the premier art tour of the 1990s.

President of the board and chief executive officer of

the Barnes Foundation, Mr. Glanton leads a financially struggling organization that holds what is generally considered the finest collection of impressionist and post-impressionist paintings in the Western Hemisphere, and possibly the most important private art collection anywhere. The legacy of Albert Barnes, M.D., the small gallery just outside Philadelphia contains no less than 161 Renoirs,

57 Cézannes, 54 Matisses and seven van Goghs. In its sheer number of works by these and other artists of their eras, the Barnes rivals the museums of Paris, the Museum of Modern Art and the National Gallery of Art—combined.

The trove includes one of two paintings considered most important in 20th-century art, Matisse's Joy of Life, as well as such similarly breathtaking runners-up as Cézanne's Bathers, his Card Players, and Seurat's Les Poseurs. In the latter days of Matisse's life, Barnes brought the artist over from Paris to oversee the installation of his famous custom mural, The Dancers, which

adorns the arches of the gallery's main room.

Albert Barnes had no patience for what art museums, collectors or critics of his time had to say. As a result, he bought many paintings not taken seriously by the art establishment in the 1920s. With his own tastes, foresight and loot, he created a collection with an estimated value approaching \$3 billion in the current market. Today's art

connoisseurs and historians are often aesthetically and emotionally overwhelmed on first viewing the gallery, where hundreds of millions of dollars in masterpieces may hang on any single wall.

Now open to the public on a limited basis, the Barnes has always been one of the most inaccessible and eccentric institutions of its kind. That history has caused headaches for Richard Glanton.

Dr. Barnes' will perpetuated this closed-door tradition and prohibited future caretakers from selling, lending or rearranging any of the pictures. There is also a longstanding restriction against reproducing the works in color. Now struggling against these limitations, the Barnes Foundation has just barely enough funds to pay employees needed to care for its priceless assets.

Housed in a combination art deco-French châteaustyle gallery and residence that Barnes built (complete with Lipschitz bas reliefs) in the 1920s, the collection is surrounded by grounds that look like the Philadelphia



Flower Show taken outdoors. Inside, both pictures and their context are in need of help. The gallery lacks adequate heat, air conditioning, humidity control and fire protection. Its drapes must be drawn during the day because the foundation can't afford to install UV-filtering glass to protect the paintings.

An art-conservation consultant, brought in by Mr. Glanton, determined that some of the pictures had suffered damage either from mold or because they are pulling from their frames. Several needed immediate attention. Such things distress Richard Glanton, espe-

cially on days like a recent one when he learned that a Picasso hung near an aging ventilation duct had mildew on it.

Deaccessioning Considered, Dropped

A prominent lawyer in Philadelphia and prime Republican political material, Richard Glanton ignited a firestorm of controversy last year when he and fellow foundation board members proposed selling a small portion of the collection to strengthen the Barnes' endowment. The story, covered in national magazines from *The Economist* to *Vanity Fair* to *Time*, sent tremors through the art world and raised questions about museum ethics, which currently condone selling paintings to upgrade a collection but not necessarily to raise money.

In recent years, necessity has increased "deaccessioning," the museum lingo for such sales. More and more, museum officials have come to view their collections not as perpetual trusts but as a group of so many financial assets that can be traded at will for the greater good of the institution. Just selling one percent of the Barnes collection would probably have permanently solved the funding crisis at the gallery. Mr. Glanton et al. had

simply proposed auctioning 15 lesser works from the hundreds owned by the foundation.

An outspoken man who originally called critics of the plan "well-meaning but misguided," Mr. Glanton now applies that descriptor to the plan itself. Though he won't rule out that such a sale could happen in the future, he says deaccessioning "is no longer on the table. We are not contemplating it at this time."

Attack Doctor of the Art World

The man who amassed this collection made his bundle with a medical product called Argyrol. Barnes was working in Europe when a German colleague developed the antiseptic. The doctor entered a partnership with his co-worker and then, through legal and financial maneuvering, pushed his collaborator out of the business and won the rights to Argyrol. Afterward, Barnes claimed that he had invented the antiseptic himself. His innovation, however, was in marketing the product: He was one of the first to bypass the druggists, then the customary middlemen to patent-medicine purveyors, and to sell instead directly to physicians. He thus became one of the first pharmaceutical "detail men," helping to launch today's multibillion-dollar industry.

In 1919, Barnes' old high-school friend William Glackens (a painter of the defiant Ashcan School) directed the budding and now well-heeled collector to the art of the rising School of Paris. From Philadelphia, Barnes took dozens of trips to France, where he enlisted the guidance of Gertrude Stein's brother Leo and the advice of Paul Guillaume, who actually led Barnes to Soutine and Modigliani, whom the doctor is credited with having "discovered."

At the time, work by such artists was still inexpensive. The doctor bought a large Picasso for \$300, plus 16 of that artist's drawings for \$1 each. His true objectives-works by Renoir, Cézanne, Matisse and Seurat-were more expensive. But with his fortune and vigorous tactics, Barnes nearly monopolized the market for their paintings. In one instance, described in Frank Getlein's 1988 book The Devil and Dr. Barnes, the collector bought roughly 100 Soutines for a meager \$3,000, boasting later, "I caught [the artist] when he was drunk, sick and broke and took the contents of his studio for a pittance."

Just as malevolent may have been the motives that launched Barnes' art collecting in the first place. Early in his life, he made a stab at painting and had been rejected by the art establishment. He then

began a campaign to even the score with critics and museums—through aggressive acquisition and through bitter, periodic warfare with the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the University of Pennsylvania, Penn State (his alma mater) and many other institutions whose art opinions he decried.



Today, the Barnes Foundation is again led by a spoiler. Richard Glanton, though, seeks to continue the process of opening the gallery that began three decades ago. In this, he is opposed by the trust established by Albert Barnes' lifelong devotee, the late Violette de Mazia.



De Mazia originally came to the Barnes gallery in the 1920s as a French teacher; the doctor soon made her an art instructor there. She traveled with him and his wife on his art-acquisition trips to Europe and elsewhere. Purportedly, the two would leave Mrs. Barnes behind to go off on their buying sprees. Throughout her two decades of association with the collector, de Mazia was widely rumored to be Barnes' mistress. Together the two published important books on the art of Renoir, Matisse and Cézanne.

De Mazia's presence, even after Barnes' death in 1951,

was a source of agony for Mrs. Barnes. De Mazia gradually became the last of the doctor's original art coterie and assumed near-dictatorial power at the gallery and its school. She and other staff and board members were brought to court on a number of occasions on various charges of mismanaging the foundation.

In the 1950s, arts patron Walter Annenberg unsuccessfully sued the foundation (through his newspaper, the *Philadelphia Inquirer*) to force it to open its doors to the public. Later the state attorney general took up the cause. Effectively, the only way to see the collection was to enroll as a student in the foundation's limited classes. Finally, in 1961, the Barnes opened two days a week to maintain its tax-exempt status.

De Mazia died in 1988 at the age of 89. The officers of the trust set up by her will and by the sale of her estate have attempted to block Mr. Glanton's moves to reveal the Barnes' treasures to the world. Mr. Glanton has responded in a way that may not only undercut the very existence of the trust but also will rewrite the historic role of Violette de Mazia.

From a Georgia Farm To A Philadelphia Law Office

Richard Howard Glanton started preparing for the world of big legal suits, big money and big politics in the very unbig farming town of Villa Rica, Ga. His father grew corn. His mother stressed reading. And his grandmother, who was a schoolteacher and principal, worked closely with the child.

On a school field trip to West Georgia College—for the visit of then-Attorney General Robert Kennedy (Law '51)—Mr. Glanton befriended college president James Boyd. More years passed and Mr. Glanton received a surprise letter soliciting his application to the school, when he scored exceptionally well on his verbal SATs. Mr. Glanton would go on to be West Georgia's first black,

male graduate. Despite, or perhaps because of, the intensity of the civil rights movement in the mid-1960s, Mr. Glanton says he "felt embraced at college and rarely felt hostility."

After a short stint as a high-school teacher and then with the U.S. Public Health Service, he applied for and received a scholarship to the University of Virginia law school, where he helped negotiate some tense student-faculty standoffs during the Vietnam War protests. He also met his future wife, a Charlottesville resident who attended Swarthmore. Throughout his time in school,

and to this very day, Mr. Glanton has kept a promise made early to himself, and due in part, he says, to his Baptist background: never to take a drink of alcohol.

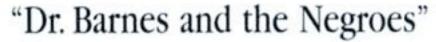
A longtime Republican ("Because historically Democrats created segregation in the South," he says.), Mr. Glanton served as deputy counsel for former Pennsylvania Gov. Richard Thornburgh. He worked briefly at the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and was co-chair of George Bush's presidential fund-raising campaign in Pennsylvania in 1987. Today Mr. Glanton is a partner at Reed Shaw Smith & McClay, one of Philadelphia's largest law firms.

The stories of Richard Glanton and Albert Barnes became forever connected because of a small, rural campus in southeastern Pennsylvania, that of Lincoln University, the oldest black college in the nation. Barnes' will stipulated that four of five trustees of his foundation would be appointed by Lincoln University after the original trustees had passed on. As general counsel for Lincoln University, Mr. Glanton was nominated to the Barnes Foundation board and elected president by it in 1990.

Although Lincoln and the Barnes had some limited educational ties, it appears that the collector designated Lincoln

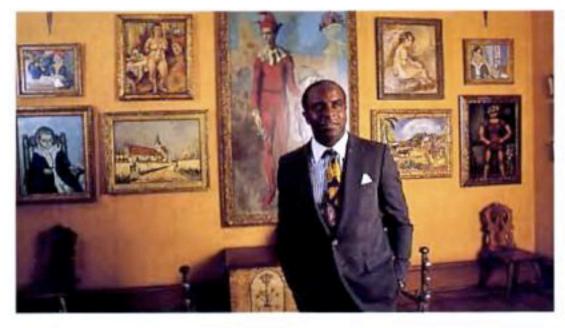
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because, unlike other institutions, it agreed to teach the Barnesian "Method" of art appreciation. In addition, in the early 1950s, naming a black school to such a guardianship was still a way for the doctor to vent his spleen against the hoary museums and universities of the Philadelphia area.



Yet, Mr. Glanton points out, "there is simply no question about the genuineness of Dr. Barnes' feeling for the cultural achievements of American blacks." Barnes grew up in a mixed-race Philadelphia neighborhood, where he became concerned about the poverty and





hopelessness that afflicted a large segment of the black community.

Barnes also was moved by religious experiences at black worship services. In a speech titled "The Art of the American Negro," Barnes described himself as "an addict to Negro camp meetings, baptizings, revivals, and to seeking the company of Negroes who, as I soon discovered, carried out in their daily lives ... poetry, music, dance and drama."

Barnes felt that black gospel music in particular had the power to reach other segments of society and help serve as a cultural unifier. He would often stage recitals of black musicals on his arboretum lawns. In "Dr. Barnes and the Negroes," a chapter in his 1963 book on the foundation, Barnes enthusiast Gilbert Cantor notes that the doctor created educational programs for unschooled black workers in his chemical factory.

He also supported a variety of black artists, including Evin Douglas and others of the Harlem Renaissance. He was a benefactor of Horace Pippin, the great self-taught black artist from West Chester, Pa., whose works remain part of the Barnes collection. Legend has it that Barnes became incensed at Pippin's art dealer when he was refused exclusive first-purchase rights to all of Pippin's works.

Tossing Off the Veil

These pieces and some of the most significant paintings of the post-impressionist period, entombed at the Barnes, have never been seen by the world at large, except in black-and-white photographs. Richard Glanton has decided that it's high time for the foundation to unveil its treasures.

THE DUAL ROLE OF THE BARNES COLLECTION

In an era when a visit to most museums is a multimedia event, the Barnes collection remains in figuratively dusty and literally untouched form. Richard Glanton's adversaries oppose removing the pictures from the walls, where the works have hung in symmetrical patterns without dates, titles or notes—many since they were shipped directly from the artists' studios in Paris in the 1920s. In some cases it is easier to divine the meaning of these cluttered arrangements than in others. On one wall, for example, the doctor juxtaposed Picasso's abstract faces with African tribal masks, to show how European artists were influenced by African art.

Barnes' admonition against taking the paintings down has, in one sense, been their salvation: They escaped the destructive restoration procedures used on museum paintings from the 1940s to the 1970s. For this reason, and despite problems with the gallery's environment, the collection is in a pristine condition matched by few others in the world.

Even Mr. Glanton isn't eager to change the way the pictures are hung at the Barnes. Laura Linton, development officer for the foundation, agrees that the Barnes "does exist as a kind of historic document of the

As an art collector, Albert Barnes had few peers. Now the trustees of the foundation be created need to carry out long-deferred maintenance on the gallery and conservation of the collection it bouses. collector," thus giving it a dual role.

Some art experts, however, don't seem to care a lick about Albert Barnes, relative to the art itself. Quoted in Philadelphia magazine last year, Mark Rosenthal, a consultant to the Guggenheim, maintained that "the artists are destroyed in that museum. Works by some of



Under his guidance, the Barnes negotiated a contract this year with Alfred Knopf to publish a definitive, twovolume catalogue of the collection. The deal gained the gallery a quick \$700,000 advance to hire the writers and photographers for the work. Shooting for the color plates began this spring.

The tradition of not photographing the paintings was a verbal one, passed on from the Barnes and de Mazia eras, to which the foundation is not bound by its indenture. The de Mazia Trust nevertheless considers the publishing deal a violation of the will and is suing the foundation to halt it. The crux of the trust's allegations, however, concerns a \$2 million donation that Lincoln University received from the charitable foundation of Sy Newhouse (Knopf's owner) soon after the company landed the Barnes contract.

The trust is attempting to remove Mr. Glanton and company (including Lincoln's president and another of its board members) from their foundation positions for having breached their fiduciary duty as a result of conflict of interest over the donation. Mr. Glanton, however, explains that no contribution was requested or discussed during the negotiations and that the foundation's inde-

pendent advisory committee recommended signing with Knopf because the publisher was simply the highest and most professional bidder. Mr. Glanton is proud of the windfall for Lincoln and notes that, while the grant was "not a complete surprise" in the end, the agreement had been made with Knopf months before he learned of the donation.

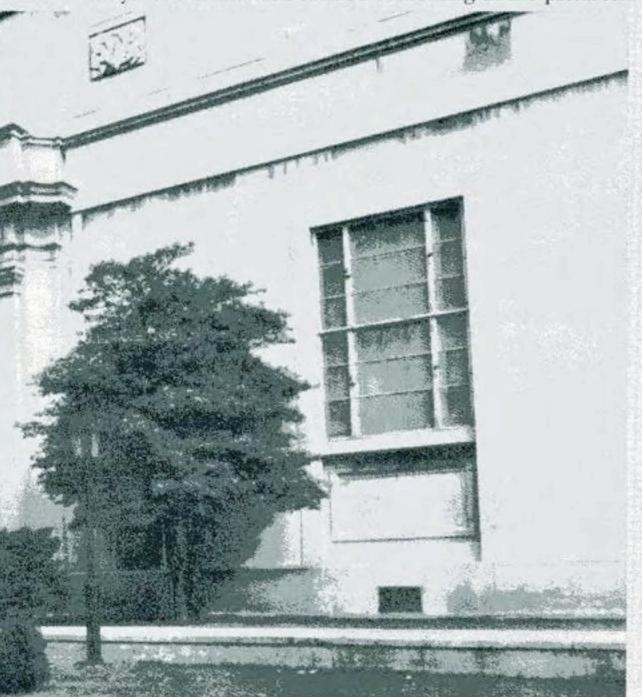
But Mr. Glanton's goals go beyond a lavish, coffeetable publication. Billionaire and one-time foundation adversary Walter Annenberg, with whom Mr. Glanton lunches on occasion, suggested an even bigger idea that is now coming to fruition: Eighty works in the Barnes collection will depart on a major exhibition tour premiering May 9 at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. Expected to gross millions for the foundation, the tour will include stops at the Musée d'Orsay in Paris and the National Museum of Western Art in Tokyo. The National Gallery will manage and insure the exhibition with the assistance of the Philadelphia Museum of Art, which will store works not traveling on the tour. Meanwhile, the Barnes gallery will at last undergo renovation.

To make all this possible, Mr. Glanton petitioned the

Continued on page 82

the greatest artists are hung 25 feet off the floor, where you can't see them."

Many visitors are also repelled by the way the great paintings are surrounded by Pennsylvania Dutch ironwork—door hinges and latches and such—arranged in ways that Barnes felt echoed something in the pictures.



Though it is true that Matisse's Joy of Life hangs in a stairwell, contrary to legend it is a nice stairwell, beautifully lit by a skylight overhead, allowing the viewer to consider the rather large painting from different heights.

Albert Barnes placed no value on academic degrees, but Mr. Glanton feels that only through gaining accredi-

tation for its programs will the foundation accomplish its educational aims. This is exactly what many Barnes loyalists oppose; they fear it will push aside "the Method," the doctor's systematic approach to art appreciation long taught in the gallery's classes. The technique incorporates principles of interaction and personal experience advanced by Barnes' lifelong friend, the educator John Dewey. It also emphasizes that art requires



Dr. Albert C. Barnes

systematic study, that it is not separate from workaday life, and that the same fundamental value is seen in art of both past and present.

Many aspects of Barnes' rationalistic, scientifically analytic approach are either pooh-poohed or considered old hat by the contemporary art world. While Mr. Glanton says that the Method will be retained in some way, he considers it "unimportant" to the art student.

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appropriate court in June to amend Albert Barnes' will so that

- The pictures can leave the gallery under critical fundraising circumstances such as these (On July 22, the court approved the departure on a one-time basis only.);
- The foundation can invest more flexibly (The \$10 million endowment left by Barnes has not grown at all because its investments were restricted to government and railroad bonds.); and
- The gallery can hold fund-raising and social functions and increase its admission at the door from \$1 to \$5.

Momentous Allegations

Although the de Mazia Trust continues to fight most of these changes, including the tour, Mr. Glanton may have fired the ultimate salvo in the battle earlier this year. He contends that some of the paintings sold at the liquidation of the de Mazia estate by Christie's auction house may not have been hers but in fact belonged to the Barnes collection.

Mr. Glanton and his team now believe that de Mazia "misappropriated" certain paintings to her own home during the years that the collection was under her control. To get the de Mazia Trust to back off, and with the possible goal of gaining control of the trust's funds committed to the Barnes Foundation, Mr. Glanton and his

board have asked the state attorney general to investigate.

The foundation has requested extensive documentation from the trust, including a list of works in the de Mazia estate at the time of her death and a list of the works sold at auction. The trust has refused, calling such information "not relevant." In the local press, lawyers for the trust have called Mr. Glanton's charge "a colossal red herring, pure and simple, designed to distract attention from the trust's efforts to oust the current Barnes trustees." The attorney for the trust, Jim Beam, would not return telephone calls for this article.

One painting in particular, *The Beach* by Thomas Hart Benton, was not in a complete inventory of de Mazia's collection as late as 1985 but was nevertheless sold as part of her estate. A longtime curator at the Barnes has described in a detailed affidavit that he moved *The Beach* from the Barnes gallery to de Mazia's home, under her orders. Pictures by Soutine, Prendergast and others are in question—possibly accounting for 85 percent of the proceeds of her paintings sold at auction.

Did Barnes give the paintings to de Mazia secretly because their relationship required discretion? That may never be known. Whether the de Mazia Trust will claim this in defense of its endowment remains to be seen. Barnes, however, was compulsive about documenting the contents of his collection, as well as any purchases, trades or gifts, and he apparently made no record of such

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Doing the Right Thing

A couple of days each week, Mr. Glanton's posh corner law office on the 25th floor of One Liberty Place sits empty. On these days and portions of his weekends, Mr. Glanton is away from his busy practice working on Barnes Foundation matters. He refuses any payment for his efforts. When he learned of the funding crisis at the Barnes, he turned down the president's salary and board-member's stipend to which he is entitled. In addition, he has obtained separate legal representation for the foundation, so that no cross-interests might arise with his own firm.

Nevertheless, Mr. Glanton has been accused of using his connection with the Barnes simply to increase his political visibility. Mr. Glanton won't be pinned down on his long-term political goals, which lends credence to talk that he has his eye on the mayorship in Philly, a Senate seat, or a high federal administrative post. As a candidate, he would be well positioned for the current political mood: He is the kind of neoconservative—with strong feelings about taxes and entitlements and fervent feelings about education—that even progressive-minded voters could like.

Whether calculating or not, Mr. Glanton is passionate in his current actions, stating outright that "our goal at Barnes has been to provide the public greater access to the collection—to have it make a greater contribution to society by promoting education in art and horticulture."

The man has his hands full. In these stated goals, he must also set a course for Ker-Feal, Barnes' pre-Revolutionary farm house and estate in Chester County, which has enormous potential as public gardens or as an artists' residence. In addition, he is steward of a collection that goes beyond paintings to valuable American Indian rugs and pottery, African and modern Western sculpture, and American period furniture. Mr. Glanton has hired a staff who, for the first time, will work in the areas of fund raising and public relations.

Forceful and in control by reputation, Mr. Glanton can also be disarming and amiable in person. The Virginia Club of Philadelphia was one of the first to benefit from his new policies. Earlier this year, area alumni received a personal tour of the galleries from Mr. Glanton, and he has done the same for local school children.

If his hard work safeguards the art collection and finally ends squabbling over it, all parties may have come full circle. If his allegations are correct, de Mazia succeeded in doing the very thing that threw Mr. Glanton into the hot seat when he considered it: deaccessioning the collection to enhance its endowment. "The irony," he avows, "is that she did it illegally!"

Russ Allen (Col'81) is a free-lance writer based in the Philadelphia area.

