



Kimberly Camp talks about Galerie Marie, her new artist space opening this morning in Collingswood. The gallery features the work of artists from around the nation and world. JOHN ZOME/COURIER-POST

# CURATOR IS DRAWN TO S.J.

## Ex-Barnes leader opens Collingswood gallery

By Waldy Diez  
For the Courier-Post

From Philadelphia to the Great Wall of China, Camden native Kimberly Camp has led a culturally rich life, and she is going to share it with the public.

Camp was at the epicenter of the controversial move that brought the Barnes Foundation to Philadelphia from Lower Merion, Pa. Today she will open Galerie Marie in Collingswood in honor of her mother Marie Camp, who passed away in 2007.

Galerie Marie will showcase paintings, sculptures and selected crafts from national and international artists, she says.

Camp, who has held key leadership roles at major arts institutions including the Smithsonian, served as Barnes' CEO and president from 1998

### IF YOU GO

» Galerie Marie will host a grand opening from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. today at 709 Haddon Ave.

» Collingswood's new mobile parklet has been relocated for one month in front of Galerie Marie.

» For more about Kimberly Camp, visit her website at [kimberlycamp.com](http://kimberlycamp.com)



# Art

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to 2005.

Controversy lingers over the decision by Camp and others to move the Barnes from its original home. There were numerous court challenges to block the move, but the Barnes opened at its new Ben Franklin Parkway location in May 2012.

"It was the most fulfilling work and rewarding work I've done," said Camp of Barnes' survival and new home.

"I'm happy it's in Philadelphia, and it's doing so well."

Camp is writing a book on the subject. For now, though, she's focusing her efforts in Collingswood.

Cass Duffey, the borough's director of community development, says it is gratifying to have someone of Camp's stature choose the borough to establish her gallery.

"We are very impressed with her work and her vision," Duffey said Friday, "and she was certainly a very important force on the cultural

scene."

"She told us she was attracted to the town's energy and arts scene," Duffey said. "And it's gorgeous inside. It looks like something you'd find in New Hope (Pa.)."

The public can judge for themselves when Galerie Marie hosts a grand opening from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. — to coincide with the borough's Second Saturday event — at 709 Hadson Ave.

"It seemed to make sense," Camp said of creating the space. "I had all this stuff from things I've made, from things I've purchased when I traveled, and from things people have given me in other countries."

"I really want this to be a place that people stop by because they don't know quite what they're going to find."

In addition to her tenure at the Barnes, Camp's resume includes working as an arts leader at Charles H. Wright Museum of African-American History, and the Experimental Gallery, now closed, in the Smithsonian Institute.

"I started arts admini-

stration when I came out of Drexel in 1986, and I've had a really wonderful career as a museum director," Camp said.

Prior to retiring in 2011, Camp spent 25 years establishing, curating, marketing, and managing galleries.

First, she directed the Smithsonian's Experimental Gallery. As the name implies, the gallery experimented with presentation and materials used to mount pieces in a show. Camp described the process as "quick-change stuff."

From there she went on to become president of the Wright museum.

According to Camp, during her four-year tenure from 1994-98, it was the largest African-American history museum in the world at 126,000 square feet. She developed a staff of 15 part-timers to a staff of 60 full-timers and 40 part-timers and developed an infrastructure and procedures for new revenue centers, including facility rentals, food service and retail sales.

But Camp's success started long before her



Kimberly Camp talks about Galerie Marie, her new artist space opening today. The Collingswood gallery features antiques, statuary, collectibles, textiles, books, paintings, prints and drawings. JOHN ZOMBEK/COURIER-POST

administrative career. Her interest in art came from family inspiration at the young age of 11.

"All of my family are artists," Camp stated. "It's a family tradition."

Many of her aunts and uncles worked in jewelry fabrication, photography and ceramics.

However, her real start came with a woman named Narcissa Weatherbee.

According to Camp, Weatherbee held yearly summer art classes for children in Woodbury. At the end of the classes, she

would hold a sidewalk sale, stringing up clotheslines to hang the paintings. Camp sold all of her paintings at Weatherbee's sale. "I did paintings that a 12-year-old would probably do — cartoon characters and things that I liked," Camp said. "I'm pretty sure I sold every one."

Not only does Camp paint, but she also creates dolls.

"I got into doll-making actually by accident in 1983," she said. "I was trying to make some extra money for the holidays,

and I thought about the dolls. I made dolls for my friend's kids over the years."

She made dolls that she called "Brown Babies" and took them to a Kwanzaa sale in Philadelphia. In four hours, she sold out. "People were running down the aisles asking if they could order things and next thing I know, I had launched a doll business."

Although she doesn't create the dolls often these days, Camp still makes her soft sculpture, cloth-filled dolls, which her father named "Kimkins."

From experience, Camp knows some of her pieces will stay, and some pieces will sell as quickly as they are put up.

"It's almost like meeting someone who you could have become better friends with and they moved away too fast. It always leaves me feeling a little bit empty when I do that. We'll see what happens."

*Courier-Post Senior Content Editor Tammy Paulino contributed to this story.*