

January, 2008

Dear Friend of the SS *United States*:

We invite you to help us preserve the legacy of the legendary SS *United States*!

The SS United States Conservancy was founded in 2004 as an initiative of the SS United States Preservation Society, a national nonprofit organization founded in 1992 dedicated to the protection and restoration of our national Flagship. We have a long track record of success, beginning with helping to craft Congressional legislation to protect the ship from destruction over a decade ago. The Society scored a huge victory in 1999 when it played a lead role in securing a spot for the SS *United States* on the National Register of Historic Places.

The SS United States Conservancy is proud of its strong working relationship with Norwegian Cruise Line (NCL), current owner of the SS *United States*. NCL purchased the ship in 2003 and is conducting extensive engineering studies to assess whether the SS *United States* can be returned to sea-going service. As NCL's plans advance, the Conservancy will work to ensure that the ship's restoration is carried out in a historically-sensitive manner and that Conservancy members can participate in the ship's rebirth. If NCL is unable to move forward with its plans, the Conservancy is actively pursuing other strategies and solutions for the ship's long-term preservation and restoration.

The SS United States Conservancy is guided by an extraordinary Board of Directors, including a Golden Globe and Emmy-award winning television producer, the granddaughter of the ship's designer William Francis Gibbs, a former SS *United States* crewmember, finance and marketing specialists, and some of the nation's foremost maritime experts.

Your membership and financial support will help us work even harder on behalf of the SS *United States*. Our current programs include:

Educating the public about the SS *United States*. We installed a large weatherproof sign in front of the ship's pier in Philadelphia and produced a colorful brochure chronicling the ship's storied history. We convened the first-ever SS *United States* crew reunion in 2004, gathering dozens of former crewmembers including some who had served on the ship for her entire 17-year service career! We also sponsored public events with the South Street Seaport Museum, the Steamship Historical Society of America, the Independence Seaport Museum, the Mariners Museum of Newport News and the American Merchant Marine Museum at Fort Schuyler. Plans are now underway to develop and mount a traveling Big U exhibit, and we are also the curator of an SS *United States* exhibit aboard the *RMS Queen Mary* in Long Beach, California.

Filming the story of the SS *United States*. We are collaborating closely in the development of a one hour documentary film, "SS United States: Lady in Waiting." We have facilitated the filming of many SS *United States* passengers and crewmembers, and have provided Big Ship Films, LLC with exclusive access to our oral history and audio-visual archive materials. The documentary is slated to premiere on American Public Television in the Spring of 2008. Stay tuned for opportunities to attend the premieres!

Building an SS *United States* archive. The Conservancy is collecting and cataloguing photos, slides and home movies featuring passengers and crew who traveled in, helped to build, and served aboard the SS *United States*. We are assisting the Smithsonian Institution in the development of the forthcoming exhibit, "On the Water: Stories from Maritime America" and are making a selection of our prints available to the National Park Service's Historic American Engineering Record and the Library of Congress's Prints and Photographs Division.

Developing a passenger list database. In collaboration with the American Merchant Marine Museum at Kings Point and a number of private collectors, we are building a database of passenger information from all 400 voyages of the SS *United States*. Individuals will be able to search these records by passenger name, sailing date, ports of call, and cabin category. This project will ultimately provide a unique snapshot of the Big U's service career.

Designing SS *United States* merchandise. The Conservancy has developed a fabulous line of SS *United States*-related products to raise awareness of our national flagship. Our "Slop Chest" store can be found on the Conservancy's website at: <http://www.cafepress.com/ssusconservancy>. Our fabulous 2008 calendar features exciting new images of the SS *United States* as well as reminiscences from passengers and crew. To order this special calendar, please call Turner Publishing directly at (800) 788-3350. Additionally, select SS *United States* merchandise is available from oceanlinerlapelpins.com, including a fantastic T-shirt and new cloisonné pin.

We are currently planning our 2008 annual gathering, so please check our website for updates and more information.

With our warmest wishes and gratitude for your interest in the SS *United States*,

Bill DiBenedetto
Chairman

Susan Gibbs
President