



WHY THE SS UNITED STATES MATTERS

By Ravi Giberson, Age 11

There are lots of flashy, fast moving things in this world. We can't forget the SS *United States* is one of them. Everyone knows her claim to fame, but there are so many more reasons than that to love her enough to bring her back to life.

The SS *United States* represents a simpler time: the 1950s. A time when most things we used in this country were made here, with pride. The SS *United States* is no exception. It showcases the engineering genius of Gibbs and Cox and how Americans could build the things that their dreams were made out of. This ship exemplifies all there is to know about style, class and grace. The SS *United States* wasn't so much about the destination, but traveling the high seas in style and comfort.

You can't help but notice her out there in the water. Some see a rust bucket, an eyesore, something that should be no more. I hope you see what I see. I see an amazing, touchable part of our American heritage and history. It is where some of my mother's most favorite actors like Spencer Tracy, Marilyn Monroe and Bob Hope decided to get a break from their busy lives. It is where both President Truman and Eisenhower chose to go for some fun. Even Walt Disney himself liked the ship so much; he filmed a movie there called "Bon Voyage" in 1962.

I might be a young man, but I realize what it will take to bring the SS *United States* even close to her former glory. Ever since she has been decommissioned, all the various owners have done little else than slowly strip parts of her away. It is time to reverse that process. We need to start to put things back.

I was at the Baltimore Inner Harbor this past weekend. They really know how to do a waterfront down there. It was so glorious to see all those historic ships lined up for our exploring pleasure. We need to take a lesson from them. Those amazing ships have such a presence that the Baltimore waterfront is a real destination. I wish Philadelphia had that going on. If the SS *United States* was restored in any capacity, it could breathe new life into the Philadelphia waterfront.

It makes me very happy to be able to talk to you all about this, since I feel very strongly about it. Often we let things go from our past that we really shouldn't. We move on and forget about them. Please don't let that happen to the SS *United States*. Let's get together, brainstorm and make our grandparents and parents proud.