



**SS UNITED STATES
CONSERVANCY**

SAVING AMERICA'S FLAGSHIP

P.O. Box 32115 • Washington, DC 20007 • (888) 488-7787 • ssusc.org

HELP THE SS UNITED STATES WIN HER MOST IMPORTANT RACE

We're heading into the home stretch in our effort to save the *SS United States* — a magnificent and irreplaceable symbol of national unity and pride. The "Big U" can still have a bright future — but only with your support!

Dear Friend,

She still holds the transatlantic speed record that she shattered on her maiden voyage more than 60 years ago. My grandfather, William Francis Gibbs, designed the "Big U" to be the world's fastest ship — but he also built her to last. As he famously boasted, "You can't burn her, you can't sink her, and you can't catch her."

As you may have read about or seen on television, earlier this year Crystal Cruises conducted an extensive feasibility study in hopes of returning the *SS United States* to service as a modern ocean liner. This would have been a dream come true for every cruising enthusiast. Upon concluding its assessment, however, Crystal decided that the expense of renovating the ship's one-of-a-kind hull to accommodate new, state-of-the-art engines and systems would have been prohibitive.

That might sound like bad news. **So why are we so encouraged about the future? Because thanks to Crystal's extensive technical assessments, we know America's Flagship is still structurally sound** and holds enormous potential as a future landmark destination that will draw millions to her decks. **The SS United States continues to endure, and our global community of supporters is larger than ever.**

The SS United States Conservancy has achieved many major milestones over the past year:

- Our efforts to save the *SS United States* received marquee coverage from major media outlets around the world, including the *New York Times*, National Geographic, Fox News, the Associated Press, USA Today, CBS News, NBC Nightly News, NPR, and many more.
- We expanded our permanent collections, including adding over 600 artifacts from the Mariners' Museum of Newport News, the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, the estate of Dr. Sara Forbes, and the collection of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Hunnicutt, III.
- We further advanced our museum planning efforts, including hosting an intensive museum design session with the Conservancy's curatorial team, preservationists, digital specialists, historians, architects, and marine engineers.
- We expanded our online presence with the launch of a new blog "Call Sign KJEH", and enhanced our member newsletter. Our Facebook fans now number almost 18,000.
- We organized a festive crew reunion and celebration in Philadelphia that attracted supporters from across the nation. More inspiring events are planned for 2017.

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Our flagship continues to beat the odds. She is now ready for redevelopment as a permanent multi-use waterfront attraction and destination — a vibrant combination of world-class museum, hotel, shops, offices, and meeting spaces. The possibilities are endless for the bold and visionary developers who succeed in saving our flagship.

Imagine bustling restaurants, stylish theaters, and restored first-class lounges evoking the glamour of the transatlantic liner era — a time and place where JFK and Grace Kelly might have rubbed elbows with the Duke and Duchess of Windsor (and their five pugs!).

With half a million square feet of usable space inside such a colossal and historic structure, the renovated SS United States would instantly become the crown jewel of any city's waterfront. She'd create thousands of jobs and attract millions of tourists.

We are determined to finally make it happen.

We're now conferring with developers and cities to achieve this bold vision. While we're doing this hard work - as well as continuing to showcase the ship's history, build our curatorial collections, and educate the public about her legacy - we still have to pay for the ship's upkeep. Believe it or not, **it costs \$60,000 a month just to insure, dock, and maintain the United States at her pier in Philadelphia. If we can't cover those costs, the unthinkable could happen.**

As journalist Peter Knego wrote about our flagship, "For me, the *United States* is hallowed ground. She is the crowning achievement of American maritime ingenuity and resolve...She wears her rust and peeling paint like scars from an ongoing battle against the elements, one that she has thus far endured."

Together we can help her endure. And we can help transform her into a glorious new beacon that will introduce new generations to her unique and historic past.

I'm more confident than ever that we'll harness the vision, passion, and financial resources to reignite this powerful symbol of our nation's history. We're in the home stretch, but we're depending on your generosity to see us through until we cross the finish line.

You can play a pivotal role in saving the "Big U" for future generations. I'm inviting you to join the thousands of SS United States Conservancy members who help keep the greatest ship afloat with their generous donations.

Our membership tiers and benefits are outlined on the enclosed reply envelope. Please help us save America's Flagship while she can still be saved. Give as much you can — and be sure to mail your contribution *today* — or visit www.ssusc.org/give-and-join/donate and donate online — so the "Big U" can win her final and most important race: the race against time.

Many thanks,

Susan L. Gibbs
Executive Director, SS United States Conservancy

P.S. For background and news updates about the campaign to save the SS *United States*, be sure to visit the Conservancy's website, ssusc.org.

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