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TRIBUTE

TRIBUTE TO THE HONORABLE EDWARD R. BECKER

DAVID H. SOUTER[†]

Irving Berlin once reflected that he didn't care who made the laws or righted the wrongs, so long as they left him alone to sing the country's songs. These sentiments have never quite rivaled *White Christmas* for America's attention, but in 1929 they appeared in the lyrics of *Let Me Sing and I'm Happy*. If you wonder how they sound, ask the Honorable Edward R. Becker of the Third Circuit, America's only federal court with both a Chief Judge and a chief piano player. Eddie (as he is known at the piano) has spent his life playing the nation's popular songs at sing-alongs in Philadelphia, circuit conferences, the Supreme Court's end-of-term party every June, and just about everywhere else with a piano and somebody who thinks he can sing. Like the Becker venue, the Becker repertoire is wide open. I've never heard anyone call for a tune the judge didn't know; never have I seen

[†] Associate Justice, Supreme Court of the United States.

him need a sheet of music. Say "Becker" and the first thing that comes to mind may not be *Amchem*,¹ but "The Good Old Summertime."

But there is *Amchem*, too. Berlin thought the songs were enough; Judge Becker does not. Hence the life on that other bench, with its jurisdiction only a little less plenary than the virtual Becker songbook. Hence, too, opinions like *Amchem*, *Yamaha Motor Corp.*,² and *Gozlon-Peretz*,³ to pick a few: each one shaping a debate, each grounding a judgment affirmed on review. These, and others like them, sound the bass notes of the judicial life, the notes of scholarship and care that make great judging. You will catch their resonance in the essays set out here to honor my friend in this time of his midpassage.

¹ *Georgine v. Amchem Prods., Inc.*, 83 F.3d 610 (3d Cir. 1996), *aff'd sub nom. Amchem Prods., Inc. v. Windsor*, 521 U.S. 591 (1997).

² *Calhoun v. Yamaha Motor Corp., U.S.A.*, 40 F.3d 622 (3d Cir. 1994), *aff'd*, 516 U.S. 199 (1996).

³ *United States v. Gozlon-Peretz*, 894 F.2d 1402 (3d Cir. 1990), *aff'd*, 498 U.S. 395 (1991).