

WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY LAW QUARTERLY

VOLUME 1978

NUMBER 4

FALL

A TRIBUTE TO ARNO CUMMING BECHT

INTRODUCTION

EDWARD T. FOOTE*

Arno Becht loves students. He is a man of wide accomplishment—from his early distinction in the law as editor-in-chief of the *University of Chicago Law Review* through decades of quality in scholarship and other professional contributions, but above all, during his thirty-eight years on the faculty of the Washington University School of Law, he loved his students. And they loved him.

For Professor Becht, loving students was not coddling them, but expecting much and getting it, always in a way that encouraged them to do their best, because they knew he cared so much that they master the law. Students did not fear him. They feared disappointing him and they respected the law they were learning much more because he respected it, and as a man stood for so much that is fundamental to justice itself: fairness, compassion, decency, yes, and hard work.

Professor Becht's guiding professional characteristic was that the law was never more exciting than when he was able to ignite in freshmen those first powerful flashes of understanding, those early connections, and then guide them case by case, concept by concept, toward the whole.

To the law of torts, for thousands of our graduates, Professor Becht brought clarity through his unique level system of analysis. His breadth of knowledge of the law is reflected in the courses he taught here:

* Dean, Washington University School of Law. B.A., 1959, Yale University; LL.B., 1966, Georgetown University.

Code Pleading	Labor Law
Common Law Actions	Legislation
Damages	Restitution (12 years)
Environmental Controls	Sales
Equity	Specific Performance
Introduction to Law	Torts (22 years)
Judicial Remedies	Trusts
Jurisprudence	Wills

I have known Professor Becht only in recent years, since he suffered the stroke that slowed his body. His astonishing courage is legendary. Never once through the years have I heard him complain, not once. To him, his sickness was a fact to be dealt with—an inconvenience, no more—and from near incapacitation, he struggled by uncommon discipline to learn again to walk, and to teach his students.

One cannot speak of Professor Becht except also in the same breath of LaVerne, his wife of forty years. I have known no two people that complement each other more completely. We are glad indeed that the Bechts are remaining in St. Louis, that Professor Becht, now emeritus, still graces our halls on his way to the office, always stopping to ask a student how things are going. Dedication of this issue of the *Law Quarterly* is one more student way of saying, “thanks, Professor Becht.” The editors say it for us all.