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## 'Basically an Optimist' - Still

*By Peter Robinson*

17 June 2010

*"No, no. Not at all."*

*So says Gary Becker when asked if the financial collapse, the worst recession in a quarter of a century, and the rise of an administration intent on expanding the federal government have prompted him to reconsider his commitment to free markets.*

*Mr. Becker is a founder, along with his friend and teacher the late Milton Friedman, of the Chicago school of economics. More than four decades after winning the John Bates Clark Medal and almost two after winning the Nobel Prize, the 79-year-old occupies an unusual position for a man who has spent his entire professional life in the intensely competitive field of economics: He has nothing left to prove. Which makes it all the more impressive that he works as hard as an associate professor trying to earn tenure. He publishes regularly, carries a full-time teaching load at the University of Chicago (he's in his 32nd year), and engages in a running argument with his friend Judge Richard Posner on the "Becker-Posner Blog," one of the best-read Web sites on economics and the law.*

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