Q123 – What is the name of the national anthem?

DOUGLAS GINSBURG, Federal Judge, U.S. Court of Appeals, D.C. Circuit:
The name of our national anthem is “The Star-Spangled Banner.” In other words, a flag spangled with stars. Ironically, the words were set to a drinking song then popular in Britain – at the very time we were fighting the British in the War of 1812.

All through the night of September 13th, a British fleet bombarded Fort McHenry, which guarded Baltimore Harbor. At dawn, the American garrison raised a huge flag. An American lawyer named Francis Scott Key had anxiously watched the bombs bursting in air. When he saw the flag waving over the fort, he wrote a poem, The Defense of Fort McHenry, on the back side of a letter. Within weeks, Key’s poem was published across the country.
A Baltimore publisher printed the poem with the music of that popular drinking song – and retitled it, “The Star-Spangled Banner.” In 1918, during World War I, the anthem was played before a game of baseballs’ World Series. The stadium hushed as the band played – and fans spontaneously saluted the flag. Starting a tradition that lasts to this day.
In 1931, the Congress made “The Star-Spangled Banner” our official national anthem – just in time for the 1932 summer Olympics.
In arenas and stadiums across the country, “The Star-Spangled Banner” is often played before a game begins. The anthem is seen as a tribute to those who fought under the flag for the freedoms we enjoy. “The Star-Spangled Banner” is a reminder of what unites us, not what divides us.