Preface and acknowledgements

The purpose of this volume is to relate positive and negative autobiographical phenomena as perceived with reflections by eminent economists. Thus, this book is intended for those individuals who are fascinated by scholars' lives, personalities and morals. The collection of essays in this volume offers us details about wise and accomplished lives. The essays contain elements characteristic of great literature – pathos and wit, pain and humor. Examining the essayists' reflections here affords us the opportunity to explore the question of what makes distinctive and exciting scholarship, as well as probe the criteria for excellence. Further, as a reviewer of a recent book notes, 'autobiography is a source for understanding the social history of a discipline.'¹

We are grateful for the help of a number of individuals in the preparation of this volume. We are especially indebted to Kenneth Arrow, who penned the Foreword, and to the contributors of this collection. We thank them for their congenial partnership. I feel an immeasurable debt of gratitude towards Victor R. Fuchs, a participant in this book. It was only his readiness to meet with me in the New York offices of the National Bureau of Economic Research and to overrule my dissonance 'sponsor' (who found excuses to delay reading my chapters for six to eight months) that made it possible for me to move ahead. The words of the 'sponsor' still ring in my head: 'If Victor Fuchs says it is good then go ahead.' I know that my life would have been less without him. Here I witnessed in practice the Talmudic teaching that 'the highest wisdom is kindness.' We extend special thanks to Alan Sturmer, the acquisitions editor of Edward Elgar Publishing, and to Edward Elgar himself for their enthusiastic support of this book. I asked my collaborator, Lall Ramrattan, to join me as the co-editor for this work. Observers of the scientific enterprise note that joint authorship is increasing,² and I have been very fortunate in this since Lall and I, on the basis of a single telephone conversation and without meeting each other, decided to hitch ourselves together four years ago in order to advance our modest scientific wagon. Even though Lall and I reside on opposite coasts of the United States, our productive and joyful team effort unites us. I am immensely grateful to him since the collaboration, besides maximizing the differential between the returns and costs of publishing, brings reflection and conversation of a kind that single authorship cannot provide.

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M.S.

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L.B.R.

NOTES

1. Evelyn L. Forget, review of *Passion and Craft: Economists at Work*, ed. Michael Szenberg (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999), *Review of Social Economy*, **59** (1) (March 2003), 112.
2. Michael Szenberg, 'Intellectual Collaborative Experiences, Editorial Note,' *The American Economist*, **40** (Fall 1996), 3–4.

‘No bird soars too high, if he soars with his own wings.’

William Blake