Preface

This book contains 25 interviews with leading economists who are based in the United States and Europe. They are asked to reflect introspectively on their methods of working; provide insights into the process of scientific discovery, knowledge creation, and research dissemination in economics; and identify and evaluate specific contributions and findings from the discipline. The intended reader is someone at any stage of a research career in economics, whether you are a graduate student or a well-established scholar.

The interviewees were selected on several criteria, the most important of which were prominence within the economics profession, as measured by academic awards and citations, and diversity, as proxied by age, gender, research interests, research style, and institution. The interviews were all conducted face-to-face at 13 locations in the United States over the period June 2010 to August 2011.

Compiling this book was a deeply enriching and pleasurable experience. First and foremost, I learned an enormous amount about the work habits of some of the world’s greatest economists. Second, it was an unexpected lesson in the complexities of the human condition. Failure, rejection, disappointment, frustration, courage, perseverance, and triumph are characteristics that burn brightly throughout this volume. Therefore, I hope that you find these interviews not only fascinating and stimulating, but also inspirational.