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.’

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 dissertation ‘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, 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.

I cannot imagine writing without the help of friends. Friends who provide
solace, advice, and are always there to listen include my colleagues and co-workers at Lubin – Lew Altfest, Walter G. Antognini, Jeannine Arrigo, Peter Hoefer, Surendra Kaushik, Matt Morey, Jouahn Nam, James Russell, Joseph Salerno, Nicola Simpson, Lynette Wailoo, Diana Ward, Berry Wilson and Carmen Urma. I also wish to thank Aron Gottesman and P.V. Viswanath for their invaluable critiques of the work as it passed through successive stages and for their literary sensibilities and their warmth. The librarians of Pace University – Elisabeth Birnbaum, Michelle Fanelli and Lucy Gonzales – were unfailingly enthusiastic and supportive.

I received encouragement, advice and labor on this volume from Andrea Pascarelli, the editorial assistant of the Center for Applied Research, and from Hema Gajaraj, my devoted graduate research assistant. They both have lightened many a task. Sandy Franklin, an MBA Lubin alumna and a freelance editor, has been very supportive of my efforts. She is a marvel of humor, understanding and generosity of spirit. The last three books benefited tremendously from her professional rigor.


Again I acknowledge with gratitude the continuing assistance, both intellectual and material, and the encouragement for this and my other scholarly quests of Arthur L. Centonze, Dean of the Lubin School of Business, Pace University.

My children Naomi and Avi, their spouses Marc and Tova, and my grandchildren Elki, Batya, Chanoch, Devora, Ephraim, Ayala and Jacob fill my life and my wife’s life with wonder and joy. For me, children offer a tremendous sense of pride, accomplishment and renewal, not the least because most of my family perished during the Holocaust.

M.S.

I would like to thank my family – my wife Noreena, and my children: Devi and her husband Arjun, Shanti, Hari and Rani, and my grandchildren Brian and Sabrina – for their patience and understanding for allowing me the time I put into this work. There are many teachers that have molded my methodological perspective in economics that I wish to thank as well. I particularly thank the late Alan Coddington for my positive economic outlook, and Thomas Vietorisz for his teaching of other philosophical methods. I want also to acknowledge the unselfish recommendation of Professor Charles Baird of California State University, Hayward for recommending Roger Garrison instead of himself to cover the Austrian perspective in this volume. Last but
not least, I wish to thank Michael Szenberg, who was overly generous to bring me on board of this project. I consider myself lucky that he chose me instead of his so many other capable friends.

L.B.R.

NOTES


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

William Blake