

# Acknowledgments

The work of antiracism is hard, especially when you're often witness to the oppression of others, and even more especially when you're not only witness but subject to racist practices. But what makes this all the more worse is when you have status and power in institutions with continuing legacies of oppressions, like schools. This is why I wish to acknowledge and thank each and every one of the contributors to this volume. They, like Frankie and me, are individuals who recognize that the work we do in academic institutions either will perpetuate the status quo built on legacies of racism, sexism, homophobia, and class domination (to name some obvious few), or intervene. I believe they have, as have Frankie and I, chosen to intervene in theoretical and practical ways.

I also wish to thank my friend, Frankie, who writes about our transracial connections stemming back to 2008 in her book *I Hope I Join the Band* (2012). She writes:

It is a mark of the authenticity of the care that animates all sorts of relationships when this work feels joyful even in the hardest moments. In the case of transracial friendships, I think, that joy may develop more slowly, as we learn how to believe that we can lean toward one another without leaning unduly on one another: that together we can resist the power racism possesses to distort, subvert, and ultimately destroy relationships that transgress established racial order. (146)

Too many white people, I think, resist forging even casual friendships, let alone deep ones, with people of color who challenge their established ways of thinking and being. And when some do forge relationships, they sometimes take a paternal or maternal stance toward their friends, even when those people of color are more accomplished or older than they are. It's a real trip. So I thank Frankie for sticking with the friendship for the sake of antiracist work, and for being willing to call out and also be called out, as we all should be.

Lastly, I wish to thank my lovely wife, Yulanda Young, who allows me to make time for work, as long as I make time for her. And I want to send out through these pages kisses and hopes to my youngest daughter, Ari Zhah Young, toward whom I hope the world will learn to be kind.

—Vershawn Ashanti Young

So far as I can tell, there is no finish line for the work of antiracism. There's no point at which anyone—at least not anyone I know—can legitimately claim to have conquered racism in their own lives or to have made a sufficient contribution to racial justice locally or globally to be legitimately done with the work. Because our ability to see ourselves and our relations, to know ourselves and the effects of our actions on others is always limited, always partial, we need one another. We need companions, guides, and friends who will both challenge us and stay with us as we labor to learn together the nature of the work before us in the most everyday as well as the most extraordinary moments of our lives.

I am exceedingly grateful to those who have graced my life and work with their presence, their patience, their dedication, and their joy. I am grateful to the writers whose work composes this volume, to our editor, Michael Pemberton, who really has stayed with us, and to our reviewers, whose kindness and critical acumen has made the work so much better. Sherita Roundtree, while a graduate student at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, and Greg Campbell, a graduate student at the University of Waterloo, both provided invaluable assistance at different stages in the development of this book. I am grateful to the host of colleagues and friends who cajoled and encouraged me when I grew tired, mourned with and lifted me when the death of my mother challenged my will to keep on keeping on with the project.

I am thankful for Vershawn, whose friendship is one of my greatest pleasures, whose collegiality has sustained me in moments when I am most frustrated or inclined toward despair, and whose willingness to challenge and be challenged keeps me on my toes, keeps me thinking hard, and keeps me laughing, too. I am more effective in the work that matters most to me because of Vay's support. I am a better ally for his critical engagement with me and with my work. I am more joyful for the presence, the spirit he brings to our co-labors as well as our co-journeys.

Always and forever I am grateful to my family—to my children: Dan, Lucy, and Grace, who ask terrific questions, tell great jokes, and model courage as they intervene and disrupt the racism to which they also bear witness. And most of all, I am grateful to my husband, Mike, who stands with me, thinks with me, pushes me, and who stays, thank God, no matter what new chaos I insert into our lives. I could not be who I am, do what I do, sustain my hope without Mike's kind and generous presence in my life.

—Frankie Condon