

Acknowledgments

I have taken many professional risks during my career.

Perhaps too many risks.

I have certainly had to face the anger and concerns of individuals, communities, and universities over the past thirty years. And at these moments, I have been blessed with the love, security, and confidence that can only emerge from close friends and dedicated colleagues. I hope as they hold this book in their hands, each sees the wisdom shared with me during such moments infused on every page.

I would have no career without the intellectual and moral vision of Lori Shorr. I doubt Lori will ever write a book. She is too busy engaging in the hard work of change. If she were to take on such a task, however, the pages would demonstrate the type of moral courage, intellectual insights, and strategic vision required to reform education in Pennsylvania and Philadelphia. It would document her victories and her refusal to accept failures. It would document what commitment to change means. And the book would also demonstrate how each of Lori's projects have served as incubators for those on the wrong side of privilege to challenge racist, sexist, and classist structures and to achieve economic security, happiness. It would be a powerful book. Yet it will probably never be written. But in every sense of the word, Lori has been a true co-author of the book you now hold in your hands. It is full of her vision and insights, but I know it pales in comparison to her own efforts. Lori has been (and always will be) my model for what ethical community-based political advocacy can achieve. To me and many others, she is simply remarkable.

In the early stages of my career, I was blessed to work with individuals such as Eli Goldblatt, Sue Wells, Dennis Lebofsky, Nicole Meyenberg, August Tarrier, Yolanda Wisher, Linda Hill, and Vanessa Allen. While my work with Eli is probably more well known, I speak for both of us in stating: The collective moral and political vision of these individuals were the steel beams upon which the aspirations of the Institute for Literacy, Literacy, and Culture, as well as New City Community Press were built. Yet, it was at Syracuse University, within that remarkable community of scholar-activists, I came to fully recognize the meaning and import of working for change. I will be forever grateful for the insights shared by my close colleagues: Patrick Berry, Collin Brooke, Kevin Browne, Rebecca Howard, Kristi Johnson, Krista Krause, Krista Kennedy, Carol Lipson, Margaret Himley, Brice Nordquist, Louise Wetherbee Phelps, Faith Plvan, Gwen Pough, George Rhinehart, Tony Scott, and Lois Agnew.

Within that vibrant political culture, I need to express my deepest gratitude and admiration for Eileen Schell and John Burdick. To my mind, Eileen Schell represents the best of what our field can offer in terms of scholarship and advocacy. During our time together, we would debate ideas, post political flyers in

CCCC hotel bathrooms, and battle for our students. At moments when the administration pushed to shut down my work, Eileen was an unwavering ally. And for those who have had Eileen as an ally, you also know that means you are going to win the battle. Her support is a true comfort in the midst of any struggle. I remain in awe of her intellect and her achievements. I was also incredibly fortunate to work with John Burdick, whose partnership led to many of the insights and essays in this collection. It is a bitter blow that John is no longer with us. But it is a comfort to realize his legacy of fighting for justice continues on in his students and community allies. John, I miss your friendship every day.

Syracuse also provided me with the opportunity to witness the next generation of scholars learning their craft. I was fortunate to work with several of them. Romeo Garcia modeled an ethics and commitment to his community from the moment of his arrival at Syracuse. I am not surprised by his success and growing influence in our field. Jessica Pauszek entered Syracuse as a graduate student but has become a true intellectual partner in publishing and community projects. Her impact on the Working and Writing for Change Series has helped the project realize its full potential. And her deep commitment to working-class communities has often served as a reminder of what is important in the midst of academic dramas. Jessica's commitment to the working class is shared with another of my important Syracuse allies, Brian Bailie, who was a key figure in creating the Best of Rhetoric and Composition series as well as our work editing *Reflections*. Finally, I have been fortunate to learn from Jason Luther and Justin Lewis about many important and vital ways to understand the possibilities inherent in the technologies of writing and publishing. I hope all of them see their influence in the work detailed in this pages that follow.

Today, I am located at the University of Virginia (UVA), blessed with colleagues such as Tamika Carey, Steph Ceraso, Kenny Fountain, Kate Kostelnik, Sethunya Mokoko, Kate Stephenson, Kevin Smith, and Jim Seitz. I met Jim at almost the exact moment I met Lori Shorr, which is to say before my "career" could even have hoped to have begun. Through the decades that followed, through protests and controversies, personal highs and lows, Jim has been the steady and reasoned voice that has always provided a pathway forward. I remain grateful for his friendship and support. It is also the case that since initially reading his book, *Motives for Metaphors*, Jim has also remained one of my favorite writers in the field. I often use his writing, marked by generosity, commitment, and insight, as a benchmark for my own. And I hope that as folks read the writing in this volume, they will recognize all the other scholars, advocates, community members whose wisdom has influenced my work. I would only highlight several people out of this important community for their sustained and important influence: Linda Adler-Kassner, Jonathan Alexander, Cristinia Kirklighter, Ellen Cushman, Keith Gilyard, Mark Lyons, Paula Mathieu, Terese Monberg, Jackie Rhodes, Elaine Richardson, Ira Shorr, Sylvia Simms, and Kate Vieira. They have provided a community marked by commitment, ethics, and grace. I am blessed to have had them

in my life. This collection would not have been possible without the support of Mike Palmquist and the WAC Clearinghouse as well as the expert copyediting of Annie Halseth. I am grateful for their consistent support.

And I am honored to have had the opportunity to work with global advocates for democracy while at UVA. Myo Yan Naung Thein and Cho Cho Aung literally changed the direction of my career when they arrived at the University of Virginia. Through their friendship, I have come to learn what profound commitments to democracy require, the cost of such work, and the importance of continuing the struggle. And as importantly, I have learned that kindness and compassion do not have to be sacrificed on the altar of advocacy. Meeting Srdja Popović transformed my understanding of what advocacy can accomplish as well as introduced me to amazing advocates, such as Jhanisse Vaca Daza and Evan Mawarire, among others. The value of such a staunch ally as Srdja in building a home for advocacy at the University of Virginia cannot be overstated. It has been a gift to work with him and I hope we work together for years to come. Srdja and I understand that our work on the Democratic Futures Project would not be possible without the labors and strong support of individuals as Steve Mull, Derek Brown, Tessa Farmer, Camilo Sanchez, Brian Owensby, Stephen Betts, Dave Edmunds, Roberto Armengol, Stacey Trader, and Sarah Arrington. Once again, I have been fortunate to have found such strong allies.

My most enduring ally has been my mother. Since birth, she instilled in my being a belief in the value of every individual. Travelling the globe as a military spouse, my mother taught me to value other cultures and traditions. And in the midst of military bases and soldiers, she taught me the value of peace and non-violence. She has been all a child could ask of a parent.

This collection is necessarily a reflection of past efforts. I have been blessed, however, to see the future emerge through the lives of my amazing children and their partners: Eliot and Kristin; Sadie and Aaron; Jude and Emma. At the end of the day, I do not know if all my work has produced real change. I do not know if I have lived up to my own aspirations. I do know that nothing has filled me with pride as these wonderful people.

And finally, to Essie, my granddaughter. By the time you are old enough to read these essays, the world will be different. New battles and new issues will have taken over. I hope, however, that in these pages you will recognize all the work committed individuals undertook to provide you the future you deserve. It will be the joy of my life to watch you grow into that world, take your place within it, and amaze everyone with the wonder that is you.

(And don't forget, take risks.)