

## Preface and Acknowledgments

WHEN STARTING TO READ A BOOK, it is important to know what to expect. What story are the authors telling? What is their viewpoint or bias; what ax do they have to grind? That is the purpose of this Preface, to provide the information on what we set out to do and why, and to thank the many people who have helped us along the way.

This book relates the story of the founding and the subsequent forty years of maturation of the Mount Sinai School of Medicine. We have placed the emphasis on an analysis of the early years of the School, along with a more general report of the current state of the institution. We recognize that we do not have the distance of time or objectivity to place today's events in context, and so we relate the current shape of things and rely on others in the future to assess the meaning.

This leads us to the inevitable question of why we are writing this book now (2003), on the fortieth anniversary of the School. There are many reasons why we have chosen to write about the Mount Sinai School of Medicine at this time. The most obvious reason is that this is the time when we could write about it; in ten years, for the fiftieth anniversary, it is not certain that we will have the desire or time to devote to such a project. Another compelling reason for pursuing this work now is that many of the founders and early leaders of the School are still active and available to us to provide insights and information that are not otherwise recorded. Finally, the publication of the School's history now completes the wider telling of the Mount Sinai story that was begun in *This House of Noble Deeds: The Mount Sinai Hospital, 1852–2002*<sup>1</sup> and *The Sinai Nurse: A History of Nursing at The Mount Sinai Hospital, New York, New York, 1852–2000*.<sup>2</sup>

Clearly, as people who have worked at Mount Sinai since 1954 (Aufses) and 1986 (Niss), we are not unbiased reporters of past events. Aufses had the experience of being actively involved in many of the events recounted here; he was in fact a representative of the Department of Surgery on the original Curriculum Committee. Still, we have

striven mightily to ensure that nothing untrue appears in these pages, and we have verified our memories, and others', against official documents from the period.

We would like to thank the many people who have read (and reread) sections of the text, drafted notes and chapters about their departments, sat for interviews, and replied to innumerable questioning e-mails. We would mention in particular (in alphabetical order): Stuart Aaronson, F. Carter Bancroft, Tibor Barka, Mark Chassin, Robert Desnick, Patrick Eggena, Ravi Iyengar, Panayotis Katsoyannis, Terry Krulwich, Sherman Kupfer, Jeffrey Laitman, Robert Lazzarini, John Morrison, Peter Palese, Irving Schwartz, Paul Wassarman, Harel Weinstein, and Savio Woo. We would especially like to thank Milton Sisselman and Nathan Kase for their extensive assistance in helping us to get the facts, and tone, of the times just right. We are also most grateful to Emily Falk for her invaluable work during the summer of 2002. In addition to her research on the early years of the basic science departments, she traveled the Northeast, interviewing not only current undergraduate and graduate students but also a number of alumni. The results of her efforts form the last, and perhaps the most enlightening, chapter. Harriet Aufses read, and reread, every revision of every section; her comments were invaluable. We must also thank Drs. Mark Chassin and Larry Hollier, Chairmen of the Departments of Health Policy and Surgery, respectively, and Lynn Kasner Morgan, Associate Dean for Information Resources and Systems and Director of the Levy Library, the chiefs of our respective departments, for their assistance and understanding while we pursued this project.

We also recognize the support and trust the Mount Sinai leadership and its Boards of Trustees have placed in us by encouraging us to write this history. In addition, we want to thank Andrew Heineman, a longtime member of the Board of Trustees, for his generosity. We are again indebted to New York University Press for its patience and assistance, in particular to Eric Zinner, Editor-in-Chief; Emily Park, Editorial Assistant; and Despina Papazoglou Gimbel, Managing Editor. And, while we acknowledge the assistance of these many people, we must note that any errors of omission or fact are solely our responsibility.

Finally, we would most especially like to thank our families for their continued support and patience, which allow us to carry on this work. They encourage us in our obsessive efforts when needed and forgive us when necessary.