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Acknowledgements

The Twenty-First Annual Klutznick-Harris Symposium took place in Omaha, Nebraska, on October 26 and 27, 2008. Like this volume, it was titled “Rites of Passage: How Today’s Jews Celebrate, Commemorate, and Commiserate.”

The first Symposium that I organized and oversaw was held in October 1996. That may have been my rite of passage as holder of the Klutznick Chair in Jewish Civilization at Creighton University. By the time we began planning our twenty-first Symposium, we had developed—and continued to perfect—our own set of rituals, from deciding on a topic and formulating our Call for Papers, through evaluating proposals and determining travel schedules, to reserving hotel rooms, arranging for shuttles, and ordering food.

It is not a task for the faint of heart or those averse to detail. And it is most decidedly not a task for one person. For several years, I have been blessed with the most accommodating and understanding colleagues in the entire world (within or outside of academia): Dr. Jean Cahan, director of the Harris Center for Judaic Studies at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln; Dr. Ronald Simkins, director of the Kripke Center for the Study of Religion and Society at Creighton; and Mrs. Fran Minear, who works with both Ron and me. Additionally, Mary Sue Grossman, director of operations and programming for the Omaha Jewish Federation’s Center for Jewish Education, insures that everything runs smoothly at the Jewish Community Center, where our presentations take place on Sunday. A committed group of individuals works with us on Monday for an equally smooth series of events on the Creighton campus.

This volume marks the beginning of a new collaboration with the Purdue University Press, whose director Charles Watkinson has extended every possible professional and personal courtesy to make us feel at home among the growing number of Jewish Studies publications of his Press. Special thanks also go to our colleague Zev Garber, who, acting in the best tradition of “matchmaking,” brought together our Series and the Purdue University Press. May this new venture be mutually beneficial and satisfying!

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