

FOREWORDS

Richard C. Levin

President of Yale University

This volume contains the proceedings of a conference that constituted one of the principal highlights of Yale's Tercentennial celebration during the year 2001. It is the result, and, fortunately, only one result of an effort initiated by Professors Nancy Cott, Dolores Hayden, and Judith Resnik to mark the role of women at Yale. That role, for most of Yale's 300 years, was shamefully limited. The admission of women to Yale College in 1969 began a process of radical transformation that has yet to run its course fully. Some of the papers in this collection provide perspectives on that process; others mark the contributions that pioneering alumnae have made to the wider society.

The conference was but one of the efforts made by its organizers, ably assisted by Alison Mackenzie, to highlight the lives and works of Yale alumnae and give them greater recognition during our Tercentennial year. But from the beginning the organizers had a broader purpose: to build a sustainable base for a stronger community among the women faculty at Yale and for a stronger connection between women faculty and alumnae. This is a most worthy institutional goal, and it is one that Yale will continue to support enthusiastically.

We have made a lot of progress at Yale in the last tenth of our 300 years, since the numbers on Maya Lin's beautiful Women's Table have become less and less embarrassing. But we have a long way to go. We know that. I am optimistic that the uncrossed bridges will be crossed and the unfilled promises will be fulfilled in the years to come. We look forward to the continuing development of the spirit of community among women in our institution. I am confident that the Women Faculty Forum will contribute in important and unexpected ways to the intellectual and professional development of the broadest community of Yale women—students, faculty and alumnae. The papers contained in this volume give evidence of the community that is being built before our eyes.