Acknowledgments

A writer's development is inherently a social process, and the story of my own journey as a writer and scholar is, in large measure, about the many people who shaped my thinking, encouraged my writing, supported me, and guided me along the way. I have been extremely fortunate to have as mentors some luminaries in the field of writing studies: Donald Murray, whose influence on my thinking has been profound and whose personal support for me I describe in the Preface to this book; Donald Graves, Murray's close friend and colleague at the University of New Hampshire (UNH), who taught me the meaning of research and introduced me to Paulo Freire's work; Thomas Newkirk, whose course on composition theory transformed my thinking about writing and who took me under his wing at the beginning of my academic career, despite my impatience and unwarranted youthful hubris (which must have frustrated him!), and gave me the opportunity to present my first paper at a national scholarly conference; Andrea Lunsford, my dissertation director, who taught me more about being a scholar and a mentor than anyone I ever knew and whose generous support for me took both obvious and not-so-obvious forms throughout my career; Cheryl Glenn, whose friendship, advice, and example helped teach me what it means to be a good scholar; Jim Phelan, a member of my dissertation committee, whose patience, thoughtfulness, and intelligence became a model for the kind of academic I aspired to be; Richard Ohmann, who as editor of the journal *Radical Teacher* published my very first academic article and who, years later, generously agreed to write an afterword for a collection of essays I co-edited with my good friend Scott Leonard. There are so many others whose scholarship, advice, and generosity—and friendship—shaped my career in significant ways: Heidi Andrade, Arthur Applebee, Bruce Ballenger, Lil Brannon, Roger Cherry, Dan Collins, Robert Connors, John Duffy, Janet Emig, Lester Fisher, Cathy Fleischer, Asao Inoue, Janice Lauer, Paul Lynch, Paula Mathieu, Michael Moore, Beverly Moss, Steve North, Nedra Reynolds, Bob Tremmel, Keith Walters, Irwin "Bud" Weiser, Kathleen Yancey. I also wish to recognize historians Rick Fogarty and Tony DeBlasi, my colleagues and very good friends at UAlbany, whose insights and knowledge have enriched my thinking and whose willingness to engage me in in-depth conversations about teaching and writing deepened my understanding of important aspects of postsecondary writing instruction. (Rick and Tony were also integral to the effort on our campus to create the WCI program, which strengthened undergraduate writing instruction at UAlbany.) Special thanks as well to "The Jamesons": Scott Leonard, Gerald Nelms, Rebecca Rickley, and Carole Clark Papper, my Ohio State classmates and very good friends, who provided so many opportunities over the years for rich conversations about important issues in writing studies, whose thinking shaped my own, and whose friendship provided a safe and fun space for testing ideas.

Before I was blessed to know any of the people mentioned in the preceding paragraph, I had the truly good fortune to meet James Rambeau, who literally changed my life and helped set me on the path to the academic career I have been so fortunate to have. Mr. Rambeau, as I called him then, became my advisor at Penn State, where I was an undergraduate from 1976 to 1980. I entered Penn State as a biology major, unsure of the professional path I wanted to take but assuming it would somehow involve wildlife conservation work. (I had always loved the outdoors and spent a lot of time camping and hiking as an adolescent, and by the time I graduated high school, I was a passionate "conservationist," as we used the term in those days.) In the spring of 1977, after two trimesters of studying science and math almost exclusively, I enrolled in an elective course called Contemporary Literature. The instructor was Rambeau, at the time an associate professor in the Penn State English Department and a Henry James scholar. I absolutely loved the course. At that early point in my college career, I was beginning to question my decision to study biology and my plan to become a wildlife biologist, and I was struggling to find my way in the complicated and sometimes intimidating intellectual landscape that Penn State represented. Rambeau's course reminded me how much I loved (and missed) the study of language and literature that I had begun in high school. I relished the "homework": reading authors like Vonnegut and Nabokov and poets like Sylvia Plath and Robert Lowell and writing about their work, which I barely grasped but which excited and intrigued me. One sunny spring afternoon after class, I walked with Jim (as I came to know him much later) back to his office, talking animatedly about whatever we had discussed in class that day. By the time we got to his office, the conversation drifted to my plans as a student. "What's your major?" he asked. I hesitated for a moment and (I remember this as clearly as if it happened last week) said, "Well, it's biology, but it should be English." Jim didn't hesitate in his response: "If it should be English, why isn't it?" I told him about my fading dream of becoming a wildlife biologist, the science courses I didn't really enjoy, my love of the classical languages and canonical literature I studied at the Jesuit high school I had attended, the expectations of my parents that I pursue a "good" career path (which, for them would have been medicine or the law), and my uncertainty about how to make sense of all this. This must have sounded familiar to Jim. First-generation students like me were not uncommon at Penn State in those days, and he surely must have previously encountered the confusion and anxiety that I expressed in that moment. He also must have understood that his encouragement would matter to me. It did. He helped me see that I could pursue the study of subjects about which I was passionate and find a way to make a career in those areas. I did. It was a tortuous path, but Jim Rambeau's early guidance made it possible. More important, his confidence in me and the promise he saw in my writing and thinking made it real. I will forever be grateful to him.

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