Without the ideas, inspiration and contributions of so many people, this book would not have been possible. Any book is a true team effort, and this one is no different.

As mentioned in our introduction, several of the ideas in this book were incubated in dialogues and retreats organized by the Aspen Institute over the last few years. However, what really ignited the book was what we informally called our “Wednesday Wealth Working Group”—a series of agenda-less Zoom meetings over the summer and fall of 2020 aimed at making sense of the confluence of the pandemic, recession, and national moment of racial reckoning—all of them arising in an era of already alarming levels of economic inequality. What, we wondered, did all these events mean for the inclusive wealth-building agenda that most of us have dedicated our professional lives to? What were—are—the threats, challenges and, especially, the opportunities? Could this be a generation-defining opportunity for our field? Could the country afford for it not to be? What would be the consequences of missing this moment to compel real change? Without the encouragement, insights and generous contributions of Dorothy Brown, Tim Flacke, Darrick Hamilton, Ed Sivak and Jennifer Tescher, this book simply would not have existed; they also helped make the book much better. We cannot thank you enough.

We also each have our invaluable teams to thank. Ida is grateful to the Aspen Financial Security Program team, especially Karen Andres, Dyvonne Body, Katherine McKay, Genevieve Melford, Joanna Smith-Ramani, Emy Urban and Elizabeth Vivirito. They lent their substantive areas of expertise as well as their excellent editing, framing, media and organizational skills to the book, which is immensely better because of their contributions. We also are grateful to the Citi Foundation for supporting the creation of an online “home” for the book (futureofwealth.org), which will build out over time with additional commentary, events and other content that amplify and expand the ideas in the book—and support broader engagement and impact among public, private, philanthropic, nonprofit and academic sector stakeholders.
Ray would like to acknowledge the superb contributions of Ana Hernández Kent and Lowell R. Ricketts, who not only co-authored a few essays but also generously provided research assistance to several other authors. Along with William R. Emmons, Lowell, Ana and Ray constituted the core team of the St. Louis Fed’s Center for Household Financial Stability before it evolved, earlier this year, into the Institute for Economic Equity, now led by its inaugural director, William M. Rodgers III. The Center’s focus on household balance sheets, especially its Demographics of Wealth series, was foundational for the book’s conception and evolution.

The excellent contributions of the St. Louis Fed’s contracts, legal, financial management, editing, design, production, media and communications teams deserve special recognition too, in particular: Katie Bohl, Matuschka Lindo Briggs, Loree Carvelot, Ally Davis, Brian Ebert, Sarah Hamilton, Maria Hasenstab, John Hayes, Rachel Hill, Antonn Park, Daniel Riordan, Monica Shields, Rachel Siegel and Joni Williams. It was of course no small task to manage all the contracts, communications, graphs, edits, layouts and idiosyncrasies of over 100 authors! Ray also deeply appreciates the enthusiastic support of several members of St. Louis Fed’s leadership team, especially Karen Branding, James Bullard, Daniel Paul Davis and Kathleen O. Paese. When the pandemic created a demand for projects none of us had planned for, they eagerly lent their support for this book.

Finally, without the extraordinary authors who accepted our invitation to contribute, this book would of course not exist. As they managed their own personal and professional challenges arising from the very conditions—pandemic, recession, racial reckoning—that birthed this book, they graciously and enthusiastically found time to pen original essays for this volume. Thank you, all 106 of you, for making this book possible. We hope you’re as proud as we are of what we produced together.

Ray Boshara & Ida Rademacher
July 2021