W. ANDREW ACHEPBAM in professor of social work and history at the Graduate School of Social Work, University of Houston. He also holds the Gerson and Sabina David Professorship in Global Aging, and is a fellow at the Institute for Spirituality and Global Aging and by creating the first interdisciplinary, interdisciplinary department of geriatrics at New York City's Mount Sinai Hospital. In the final two decades of his career, Butler forged a global alliance of scientists, educators, practitioners, politicians, journalists, and advocates through the International Longevity Center.

A scholar who knows Butler personally and professionally, W. Andrew Achrebaum follows this pioneer's significant contributions to the concept of healthy aging, and the notion that aging is not synonymous with physical and mental decline. Emphasizing the progressive aspects of Butler's approach and insight, Achrebaum affirms the ongoing relevance of his work to gerontology, geriatrics, medicine, social work, and related fields.
ROBERT N. BUTLER, MD
ROBERT N. BUTLER, MD
Visionary of Healthy Aging

W. ANDREW ACHENBAUM

Columbia University Press
New York
To Robert N. Butler’s daughters
—Cynthia, Carole, Christine, and Alexandra—
and to his grandchildren and great-grandchildren

And in memory of Myrna I. Lewis (1938–2005)
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Dr. Robert N. Butler became the “Visionary of Healthy Aging” here and abroad by dint of his five decades of groundbreaking research, influential writing, prudent institution building, and diligent networking. He helped to transform the study of aging from a marginal specialty into an intellectually vibrant field of inquiry. Gerontology now attracts the attention of renowned scholars, emerging professionals, students, and other experts who are determined to understand the secrets of longevity and healthy aging. Butler designed, underwrote, and conveyed perspectives on aging rigorous enough to impress scientific peers and practical enough to sway policy makers and politicians. A psychiatrist and geriatrician, Butler also initiated changes in the training of physicians and other health professionals on how to care for the elderly. All this had a profound impact on altering the lay public’s images of the aged: Butler gave people reason to question stereotypes that demeaned late life and cause to focus on healthy, productive aging.

With Butler’s death a formative chapter in the history of gerontology and geriatrics ended: we are unlikely to see in our lifetimes anyone so