During the spring of 1999 I was a visiting fellow at the International Social Sciences Institute, University of Edinburgh, Scotland. Years later I was a visiting professor and resident fellow in St Cuthbert’s Society, at the University of Durham, England. These sabbaticals provided particularly rich occasions for venturing into new research exploring the profession’s heritage in values and ethics. Access to original historical documents was buttressed by discussions about social work and social welfare, with British social workers and educators, and also with scholars from other disciplines and professional occupations. I specifically acknowledge Sarah Banks, Eric Blyth, Chris Clark, Derek Clifford, Vivienne Cree, and Michael Preston-Shoot for embracing me and my work in sharing their rich and varied perspectives. On a more recent sabbatical I was able to meet with academic colleagues in Greece and Italy and was offered exceptional support by Eleni Papouli, Annamaria Campanini, Cristina Tilli, and Michelle Ciarpi. They all enriched my understanding about social work practice from a global perspective.

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Notwithstanding continued technological developments, taking on the role of social worker involves integrating skills with multiple bodies of knowledge. In their mission to create both individual and social change, social workers continually struggle with effects of meaning and process, while balancing often conflicting ethics and mores, made ever more challenging by globalization. It is my hope that this book’s emphasis on values enriches knowledge and improves practice through its re-envisioning of social work and the social welfare in a global society. The narratives and case studies are from the many front-line practitioners in a range of locations who so generously gave of their time. I thank them all and wish I could publicly name them individually. Reflected in these pages is important work by U.S. colleagues including Elaine Congress, Bart Grossman, Lynne Healy, Carmen Hendricks, Kathy Pottick, Robin Mama, and Frederic Reamer.

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