A Personal Preface

*The end crowns all,*
*and that old common arbitrator, Time,*
*will one day end it.*

— Troilus and Cressida 4:5, 223

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO, I began this series with an extravagant comparison of the 1976 election to Faust’s search for the perfect moment, when he could say, “Tarry a while, you are so beautiful.” After a quarter of a century, I now know — as Goethe taught — that the glories of our lives come from the quest for growth, not in any final achievement.

This volume completes a series of studies over seven national elections, among which the election of 2000 certainly stands out. We have begun the new millennium with both the most rapid communication technology and the slowest counting of votes. We have witnessed both extravagant campaigning and cramped balloting. We have elected a president and Congress after votes were cast by 105 million citizens, 538 electors, and nine justices.

The dramatic events of this election offer a remarkable culmination of the volumes in this series. It was essentially a tied vote, its outcome uncertain for five weeks. Over 50 million Americans voted for both Al Gore and George Bush. In the official but controversial count of the electoral college, 271 electors chose Bush and 267 chose Gore. In the ultimate forums, the courts, Gore won a 4–3 victory in the Florida Supreme Court, and Bush won a final 5–4 victory in the U.S. Supreme Court. This even division of votes was mirrored in the congressional elections, which resulted in a 50–50 split in the Senate and a mere nine-seat Republican majority in the House. The election of 2000 became so complicated and its materials so profuse that we must rely on the new technology of the Internet to tell the story fully. Additional data can be found at this website: www.chathamhouse.com/pomper2000

Over the last quarter of the twentieth century, American politics has provided many disappointments, a fair measure of missed opportunities, and a considerable number of personal foibles and failures. The tainted vote of Flor-
ida in 2000 and its ultimate resolution by a tainted Supreme Court decision exemplify those flaws.

But these years also have conferred many inspirations and successes, such as the end of the Cold War, the opening of political opportunities to women and ethnic minorities, and the transformation of the national economy. An exemplar of these beneficent changes was the nomination of Senator Joseph Lieberman — the first national candidacy of an American Jew — which was most remarkable in fact because it generated so little controversy. The American republic stands, better if still imperfect.

To me individually, the years have been kind. I have learned a lot, gained the love and friendship of many good people, and worked productively in a stimulating and supportive environment. I take this opportunity to thank those who helped.

My professional gratitude begins with those colleagues who have collaborated on these volumes. Wilson Carey McWilliams, the only author to share in each book, has consistently been a personal support and an intellectual guide. I am indebted to the gifted analysts who have contributed to these studies in the past: Chris Arterton, Walter Dean Burnham, Barbara Farah, Marion R. Just, Scott Keeter, and Ethel Klein.

I owe a particular debt to previous collaborators who were also colleagues at Rutgers University: Ross K. Baker, Charles Jacob, and Henry Plotkin. And, for both past and present contributions of mind and spirit, I fully thank the authors of 2000: Anthony Corrado, E.J. Dionne, Kathleen A. Frankovic, Marjorie Randon Hershey, William G. Mayer, and Monika McDermott.

This volume was particularly challenging. With the rest of the nation, we had to endure weeks of spectacles, uncertainties, and reversals of fortune — Shakespearean events without Shakespearean heroes. But we also faced the special difficulty of authors delayed in writing a story that had no apparent conclusion.

In meeting this unique problem, we gained much from the discussions and manuscript critiques of friends and colleagues, including Ron Cowan, Milton Finegold, Irving Louis Horowitz, Elizabeth Hull, Milton Heumann, Stanley Kelley, and Beth Leech. For hospitality at the national conventions, I thank Kerry Haynie, Ronnee Schreiber, and Mina Silverberg. In the actual process of publication, we had exceptional help from Joanne Pfeiffer of the Eagleton Institute of Politics, and from the new leadership of Chatham House: Ted Bolen, publisher, Katharine Miller, our editor, and John Eagleson, our compositor.

My personal gratitude extends much further. Marlene Michels Pomper helped with scholarly insights and careful reading of manuscripts. More important, she provided encouragement, exemplary dedication, and pure love. My sons Marc, David, and Miles, and my daughters-in-law Rayna and Erika, inspire pride in their intellect, commitment, and zest for life. My grandsons — Aidan, Jacob,
Zachary, and Daniel — convince me that America will be yet better when their generation builds on our work.

Three persons who inspired these volumes did not reach the twenty-first century. My aunt, Lorraine Cohen, combined an immigrant’s love of America with an intellectual’s probing of its problems. My father-in-law, Emanuel Michels, exemplified the promise of American politics in his personal enthusiasm and optimism. Because politics inevitably involves compromise, it could not match his goodness, but his life remains as an ideal of citizenship. By this book, I personally memorialize their contributions to the nation they served.

Collectively, we dedicate this book to Edward Artinian. Ed originally inspired this series, personally supervised every detail of publication from contracts to page proofs, and treated the contributors as both prized authors and valued friends. Through his efforts, Chatham House encouraged new talent, strengthened the discipline of political science, and developed a list of original, teachable, and insightful books. With news and gossip, with words and wine, Ed transformed work into fun and research into achievement.

If still with us, Ed surely would be laughing uproariously at the antics of the election of 2000, even as he would be planning to make this book the best possible analysis. We hope we have met his high expectations. In his memory, a portion of the royalties from this book will be donated to the Edward Artinian Fund of the American Political Science Association, for the support of young scholars. They will carry on his dedicated work.

—Gerald M. Pomper