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Preface

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Every person has a story to share and the narratives within this book capture these stories from the voices of neighbors in a variety of Dayton neighborhoods. Each story embodies one person's perspective of place—uniquely portrayed by each individual. The overarching interconnected purpose of these narratives is to share experiences, connect to one another and strengthen our Dayton community.

For many of our storytellers these words offer sweet memories and beautiful instances of human compassion and neighborhood assets. For others the stories offer memories that are bittersweet, or even raw, as they share instances of injustice and despair that are a part of their neighborhood story—of our

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Dayton story. However, these stories also tell about personal and community resiliency and accomplishments in the face of such injustices. All of the stories are important, moving, historical, and holy—all of the stories bring us closer together, bind us in a common humanity, and create an opportunity for us to know each other better within our home of Dayton, Ohio.

These stories have been part of a journey of community building, story sharing, and awareness raising between Dayton neighbors in neighborhoods and the University of Dayton. The storytellers are excited to share this journey and their stories with you. So, now the journey continues because of you. Through your time with this book, we (storytellers, story sharers, book designers, friends, and neighbors) hope you will be inspired and moved to spark conversations in our community about how we want to address the challenges shared by our neighbors and how we want to honor and preserve neighborhood stories, history, and assets.

As we project these stories into familiar places and also into those places that have not heard—or have not listened to—the social realities of our Dayton home. We pray that opportunities are created for open dialogue, transformational change, and solidarity. With new (or renewed)

awareness, together we have the social responsibility to respond to the hurt and love expressed in ways that change the system and brings us closer to realizing the common good.

Participants in *Facing Dayton: Neighborhood Narratives*, which is a part of a larger national project called *The Facing Project*, have come together to decide what to share within in these stories. These narratives show the outcome of collaboration and desire to build community with one another and to share stories of neighborhoods and those who dwell there.

These storytellers were drawn to this project because of the intentionality around story sharing as a way to promote empowerment and social justice. Having the opportunity to share their experiences of Dayton with the younger generation—and those new to Dayton—is simply the beginning. Know the journey does not stop here with this book. The journey of justice has just begun and change will come because of you, my fellow reader and neighbor.

Join the journey by starting conversations and dialogue with these stories. Be a change-maker right here in Dayton and let these stories touch your heart and then move your feet for justice.