The dawn of the twenty-first century is an exciting and important time to be studying campaigns and elections. In the wake of the historic 2000 presidential election, arguably the most intriguing and controversial contest of the modern era, a host of electoral reforms has been proposed and implemented across the country and in the nation's capital, from bans on "soft money" to the administration of local elections by nonpartisan supervisors to improved voting technology. So too have both the shortcomings and vitality of the electoral system entered the collective public conscience. November 2000 saw the U.S. public receive a valuable national civics lesson, not only on the importance of voting, but also on the workings of the intricate machinery of the Electoral College, vote recounts, voting machines, canvassing boards, and chads—be they hanging, pregnant, or dimpled.

In addition to the prospect of fundamental election reforms, important new issues and trends are redefining the style of campaigns and elections. Both the practice and study of this subject are dynamic endeavors, ever adapting to societal changes. So it is likely that within the next ten years, campaigns and elections will be different from those we know today. A number of forces at play are worth noting: possible political realignments, the rise of third parties, new media and communications technology, Internet voting and campaigning, demographic and racial shifts in the composition of the electorate, advances in polling and public opinion practices, more women serving in public office (including the first female president?), and an increasingly disenfranchised voting public. Yet, age-old questions and problems continue.

In this volume, focusing on emerging issues and directions in campaigns and elections, we have selected timely, important, and controversial topics for inclusion. Every effort has been made to ensure that the book is accessible for students and practitioners, yet cutting-edge for scholars. Along with thematic chapters, the volume also offers several behind-the-scenes case studies. These cases place concepts into perspective, help-
ing to more fully explain the complexities of a topic or to illustrate real life effects, as well as to bridge the widening gap between theory and practice.

The cases on campaigns, for example, include a comparison of congressional races and a look at the role of ethics—in legal terms and in terms of the appearance of a candidate’s conduct—in campaigns. The cases devoted to elections provide firsthand accounts of the recent controversial gubernatorial election in Mississippi and the 2000 presidential election (with the infamous vote recounts). Also a part of the volume are cases on voters and the candidates themselves, including a probing study of the third-party gubernatorial maverick, Jesse Ventura of Minnesota, and an examination of the closely watched New York Senate race between former first lady Hillary Clinton and former U.S. representative Rick Lazio.

As with any book on a topic so complex and multifaceted as campaigns and elections, the real challenge has been to compile a reasonably comprehensive yet concise study. We believe the respected and capable contributors to this volume met that challenge by exploring current themes and trends. The contributors’ diverse backgrounds—in academia, public service, elections administration, and campaign management—along with their equally diverse perspectives on the subjects also strengthen the text.

The contents are organized into four sections, opening with an introduction that presents foundational concepts of the topics at hand to assist the reader uninitiated in the subject. The next three sections—current issues in campaigns, current issues in elections, and candidates and voters—constitute the core of the book. Each of these three major sections is divided into three essays followed by two case studies. The book closes with an examination of the 2000 congressional and presidential elections and their consequences for the future.

Our work in putting this book together was made easier by four factors, the first of which was that the topic lent itself, in our opinion, to an exciting study. Second, we were fortunate to have such capable colleagues who shared our enthusiasm for campaigns and elections. Third and relatedly, it was a pleasure to work with Lynne Rienner Publishers and its talented staff. So, Lynne Rienner, Leanne Anderson, Penny Monroe, Shena Redmond, Beth Partin, and Liz Miles, we thank you. Last, we acknowledge our spouses—Claudia Pavone Watson and Marilyn Lewis Campbell—whose support and patience are appreciated (and not contingent upon the success of this volume!); we are very lucky.

—Robert P. Watson, Colton C. Campbell
CAMPAIGNS AND ELECTIONS