Acknowledgments

My first acknowledgment goes to McLean, Virginia. If I had not grown up there, I may never have written this book. For it was there that I saw how a town can lose its identity in a single generation if the townspeople and their leaders fail to preserve it.

During my childhood in the 1950s, we lived in Chesterbrook Woods, next to Reed’s Farm (no relation), with a deep and hilly forest on the other side. We were on the edge of the more urban Arlington, Virginia, but to the west just a few miles way was a small grocery store called Tyson’s Corners at the intersection of Route 7 and Route 123. By the time I went to college, the farmlands and woodlands were entirely gone, and Tyson’s Corners was on its way to becoming one of the largest shopping malls in the world.

My next acknowledgment goes to my parents – Stella Swingle Reed and Stanley Foster Reed, who chose McLean as their home because of its rural charm. My father dreaded and mourned all the changes. Once he led me up to a high hill and we looked down on forests. “Someday, all these forests will be gone,” he said solemnly. Sadly, he was right. And more than once he observed that “The American businessman would chop down the last cherry tree.” On one occasion, I invited a Pikestaff restaurant coworker to a family barbecue, and my father refused to shake his hand. (This was no ordinary developer, but one who had been involved in a scandal pertaining to the environment. Scofflaw developers demolished protected historic buildings and legacy trees under cover of night without a permit and some officials took bribes to look the other way. I don’t recall his role, but he had gone to jail – “the pokey” – for it.)

Since growing up in McLean, I have made my home in many towns and cities – sometimes for a decade or more, sometimes for only a season. Municipalities that have sheltered me include Alexandria, Arlington, and Fairfax, VA; Avignon, France; Bennington, VT; Berlin, Germany; Oswego, NY; Paris and Poitiers, France; Philadelphia, PA; Princeton, NJ; Oswego, NY; Washington, DC; San Jose, Costa Rica; and since 2017, Fernandina Beach, FL – where I first became aware of the difference engaged citizens can make in municipal policy. Fast forward to 2020, when my lifelong love of nature and longtime engagement in policy fused into a campaign for City Commission. Although I lost, I treasure every one of the 2,307 votes I got! To see how I campaigned for the environment, visit LajouxforCityCommission.com.

Special thanks to the more than 100 neighbors in Isle de Mai who signed petitions to save trees, and who later signed my petition to get on the city ballot. Campaigning on a green platform took away from my home and work life, so I thank my family (Bernard, Franklin, and Romero Lajoux), my research colleagues

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Alexandra R. Lajoux
August 2021
A.M.D.G.

Note

1 Passcode, if needed, is Fernandina 2022.