When I left graduate school in 1979, I promised my history professor Bill Chafe and myself that I would complete the master’s thesis I had started on Black campus activism at Duke in the 1960s. After a break of more than forty years, this book is the fulfillment of that promise. Returning to a topic I had last looked at as a young man was fascinating, absorbing, disorienting, and surreal. Turning that experience into a book would never have happened without the assistance and support of many people.

Most important was Bill Chafe. In the decades since we had been in touch, Bill had become a renowned civil rights historian and author, respected department chair, mentor and adviser to multiple generations of graduate students, and one of the founders of the oral history program and the Center for Documentary Studies at Duke. As dean of the faculty of Arts and Sciences and vice provost, he spearheaded numerous significant initiatives that made Duke a more diverse and inclusive institution. Despite his preeminence, Bill readily agreed to supervise a retired corporate lawyer to whom he had not spoken in years who wanted to finish a history project left over from his distant past. Without Bill’s generosity, extraordinary editorial suggestions, and friendship, this book would not exist. In the acknowledgments to my senior history honors thesis on the Duke Silent Vigil, I told Bill that because of his brilliance, he would always be my professor and due to his warmth, he would always be my friend. Those words are as true in 2020 as they were when I first wrote them in 1977.

Others have been instrumental as well. Valerie Gillispie, the Duke University archivist; Amy McDonald, the assistant archivist; and the staff of the Duke University Archives and the Rubenstein Rare Book and Manuscript Library have supported my efforts unstintingly over the past three years. They have made the archives easily accessible, answered myriad questions, and helped me locate missing information. The passion Valerie and Amy have for Duke history and for telling the university’s many stories helped sustain me over weeks of research in Durham.
As a first-time author, I have been incredibly fortunate to work with Gisela Concepción Fosado as my editor at Duke University Press. Gisela has been a true advocate for my book, providing wise comments, kindness, and deep expertise in the publishing process. She has provided constant encouragement, kept me on track, and shared with me her passion for and deep insights into racial justice and inclusion. Gisela’s associate Alejandra Mejía has been ever-helpful in spearheading aspects of the production process. Ellen Goldlust, my Duke University Press project editor, and copyeditor Sheila McMahon did a remarkable job taking my “finished” manuscript and turning it into a polished book.

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Wesley Hogan has been instrumental to this entire process. A brilliant historian, documentarian, and gentle deliverer of hard truths, Wesley encouraged me and provided input, direction, and inspiration at every turn.

Because I have tried to tell the story in this book in the words of those who lived the events described, interview transcripts have been a key resource. I am truly indebted to those activists and administrators who sat for interviews (with me or other researchers) and am hopeful that I have done justice to their story. Special thanks to Brenda Armstrong, Charles Becton, Brenda Brown Becton, and William Turner, who sat for interviews with me in 1979 and again in 2017.

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One advantage of taking a forty-year pause in a research project is that this interval gave me the time to become father to Brenda Segal Bochner and Gregory Segal, see both grow into terrific adults and marry exceptional partners in David Bochner and Gabriella Meltzer, and benefit from the compelling in-
sights of these four remarkable individuals. Over countless dinners and other family events, my children have been a source of great enthusiasm and interest for this project (not to mention patience).

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