

Aage B. Sørensen introduced me to the study of educational attainment and social stratification course that I took in 1991 as an undergraduate. Beginning with the encouraging comments that he offered on my term paper on educational expectations, his support of my early research was invaluable. Tragically, Aage's February 2000 walk around Fresh Pond kept him away from William James Hall for longer than he anticipated, and he has since passed away. As a result, Aage was unable to read or comment on the vast majority of this manuscript, either in its original form as my 2000 dissertation at Harvard University or in this heavily reworked book.

Even though Aage was the most important figure in my early development as a scholar, he had many competitors for that status. I received mentoring, as both an undergraduate and graduate student, from the entire department of sociology at Harvard. I recognize, with each day I spend teaching my own students now, that the training I received was second to none. I am therefore grateful to all my teachers between 1990 and 2000.

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