

## Preface

The R. Buckminster Fuller Papers were acquired by the Stanford University Libraries in 1999. This acquisition was a singular event for the Libraries, both because of the size and scope of the collection and because of the new critical readings of Fuller that we anticipated.

To be sure, the organization and description of the collection, and its continuing updates, were and are a significant challenge—and an important investment for intellectual access. True to original expectations, scholarly interest in Fuller’s ideas and work and demand for access to the archive have continued unabated since 1999. The collection has inspired everything from ten-page undergraduate papers to major museum exhibitions, including the Whitney’s *Buckminster Fuller: Starting with the Universe* (June 26–September 21, 2008, New York City). Dissertation-level research, undergraduate and graduate research seminars and classes, and scholarly articles—such as those included in this volume—have all found their beginnings in the Fuller collection. In keeping with Stanford’s intention to provide for precisely such new critical readings of Fuller, we have sought to promote and encourage access in new and creative ways, including, for example, online access to full-length audio and video recordings from the archive. Stanford was not interested in simply acquiring a major collection and then hoping that someone would someday use it. The Libraries were fully expecting a new generation of scholarship around Fuller, and a spate of recent work on him has confirmed our hopes.

The volume at hand was inspired by a host of activities surrounding the Fuller archive. I recall vividly the first telephone call from Jaime Snyder (Fuller’s grandson and coexecutor for the Fuller estate) in which we discussed the idea that Fuller’s archive might possibly find a home at Stanford University. The telephone call was followed by a series of meetings. Michael A. Keller, the university librarian, and Assunta Pisani, the associate university librarian for collections and services, discussed the prospect of the archive coming to Stanford more seriously with Allegra Fuller Snyder (Fuller’s daughter) and Jaime. All parties

quickly realized that, indeed, the Stanford University Libraries would be a most appropriate home for the Fuller archive, as Stanford would be able to promote access to the unusually large collection in innovative ways and make the collection all the more available for teaching and research. Shortly after it arrived physically on the Stanford campus, the collection attracted almost immediate faculty interest for teaching purposes. Professor Jeffrey Schnapp offered two consecutive seminars on R. Buckminster Fuller, with students using the archive for their research papers. Shortly thereafter, Michael John Gorman, who was then at Stanford Libraries working with the Fuller archive, began research for a book that was later published as *Buckminster Fuller: Designing for Mobility* (Milano, Italy: Skira Editore, 2005). The Fuller collection has drawn interest from students, scholars, museum curators, and others from any number of fields and disciplines, from design, environmental studies, architecture, and art history to American Studies, and beyond. The interest is both interdisciplinary and international in scope.

Many people deserve recognition for their work on the R. Buckminster Fuller collection at Stanford. We acknowledge with the warmest regard Allegra Fuller Snyder, Jaime Snyder, and John Ferry of the Estate of Buckminster Fuller. We also thank the helpful trio of Thomas Zung, Shoji Sadao, and the late E. J. Applewhite, all of whom were friends and colleagues of Fuller.

The principal editor of the current volume, Hsiao-Yun Chu, has worked tirelessly and steadfastly with all of the authors and the staff from the Stanford University Press on this volume. She worked with the Fuller archive at Stanford for almost two full years and completed projects that have greatly improved both intellectual and physical access to the collection. Hsiao-Yun has been an invaluable colleague, without whom the present work would not have been possible.

Current and former Stanford staff members who worked on the Fuller collection in many and important ways include Glynn Edwards, Mattie Taormina, Hannah Frost, Steven Mandeville-Gamble, Sean Quimby, and Michael John Gorman. A note of thanks also goes to Professor Jeffrey Schnapp, who has been a collaborator with the Libraries on many things Fuller.

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