At the time of the first publication of the Encyclopedia of Bioethics in 1978, the then fledgling field of bioethics was neither well defined nor widely recognized. Warren T. Reich, Senior Research Scholar with the Kennedy Institute of Ethics at Georgetown University, undertook to develop a major reference work that would contribute significantly to the establishment of bioethics as a field by integrating historical background, current issues, future implications, ethical theory, and comparative cultural and religious perspectives. Professor Reich became the editor in chief for the first edition, which was published in four volumes. It was immediately acknowledged as a landmark work defining the field. The essential vision of a synthetic and comprehensive reference work for this interdisciplinary field endured and guided two subsequent editions published in 1995 and 2006—and inspired the current edition as well.

The Encyclopedia of Bioethics received the American Library Association’s 1979 Dartmouth Medal for outstanding reference work of the year and since then has garnered widespread critical acclaim. Over the years the field of bioethics has grown enormously through the establishment of educational programs in bioethics and medical humanities, from the high school to the doctoral level. The field’s growth has also been fueled by widespread mass media attention and involvement with legislative, judicial, and public policy affairs. Ultimately, the growth and influence of bioethics rest on a burgeoning corpus of scholarly research and policy analysis emanating from centers and departments of major research universities and medical schools worldwide, independent research institutes, several professional journals, and the work of many professional associations such as the International Association of Bioethics and the American Society for Bioethics and the Humanities. Amid these developments over nearly forty years, the Encyclopedia of Bioethics has been a constant, a trustworthy point of departure for further study, an anchor for the breadth and depth of the knowledge that bioethics offers society.

The new fourth edition has followed in the footsteps of its predecessors except that it has grown to six volumes, and it has a new title, Bioethics. Following the examples set by Reich; Stephen G. Post, who was editor in chief of the third edition; and their editorial colleagues and contributors, this new edition maintains an interdisciplinary, historical, and multicultural perspective and reflects the changing orientations and lines of inquiry in the field. Its contributors offer a thoughtful self-awareness concerning the bioethics enterprise and provide an assessment of new trends in the field and of areas in need of further philosophical and practical refinement. Bioethics is a work at the interface of biology,
technology, health care, and ethics. The fast pace of biotechnological development, changes in the health care delivery system, and the emergence of important new voices in a rapidly expanding field pose challenges for any comprehensive reference work. This new edition has made every effort to keep pace with such change and to reflect the global growth of bioethics.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE FOURTH EDITION

*Bioethics* has retained broad coverage of essential topic areas, including key concepts in the discourse of bioethics; ethical theory; religious ethics; the social sciences; the health care system; clinical practice and decision making; mental health and behavioral issues; sexuality and gender; fertility and human reproduction; genetics and biotechnology; organ and tissue transplantation and artificial organs; death and dying; population issues; public health; environmental ethics; and biomedical and behavioral research, to list just a few.

Of the 569 entries in the fourth edition, 221 are newly written and published for the first time. Just over 100 of these address topics not included in previous editions, and the rest offer new treatments of previous topics. Eighty-two of the new entries are addenda to “classic” entries that are reprinted without much change from the third edition. The balance of entries have been carefully updated and revised, often by the original authors. A handful of entries are reprinted with bibliography updates, and 14 dealing with the history and religious traditions of medicine and medical ethics appear in an appendix. For all revisions, whenever possible we went back to the articles’ original authors, and many agreed to bring their earlier articles up to date. In those cases where the original authors were not available, another expert on that topic was engaged.

The Appendices, found in volume six, consist of (1) a group of articles on historical perspectives on medicine, ethics, and health care, (2) a listing of historical and contemporary codes, oaths, and directives related to bioethics, with links to the primary documents, (3) a listing of additional resources in bioethics, (4) a listing of key legal cases in bioethics, and (5) an annotated bibliography of literature and health care, including a filmography of works related to bioethics themes.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Seventeen years passed between the first and second editions of the *Encyclopedia*, and nearly a decade passed between the second and third. Slightly less than a decade has elapsed between editions three and four. The fact that there is a recurring need to take a new look at the entire field once every ten years or so attests to the continuing vitality and activity within bioethics, as well as to the pace of scientific, technological, and social change surrounding issues in ethics and the life sciences.

In 2011 I was honored to assume the position of editor in chief, knowing full well that I could—and would need to—rely on the support and good counsel of Warren Reich, Stephen Post, and the wide range of scholars and colleagues with whom they had worked so successfully. This expectation has more than been fulfilled, and I want to express my gratitude to them and my admiration for what they achieved. How Professor Reich created this work from scratch I will never fully comprehend. All I can say is thank goodness I have been able to stand on foundations that others had already established. When I entered the field of bioethics in 1980, it was not common, as it is today, to take an advanced degree in “bioethics” per se. I myself learned on the job, so to speak. When I began work on *Bioethics* I certainly did not have an encyclopedic knowledge of the field; having read and edited over 500 wonderfully thoughtful and informative articles, I now feel I almost do. I will confess to Professors Reich and Post that I had never read their editions from cover to cover. If I had done so in my youth, I would have been the better for it.

One of the things that led me to undertake this assignment was the opportunity to think about the landscape of the field as a whole. I was especially intrigued by the challenge
of identifying new topics that should be given more attention in bioethics, and to encourage
that future work by including discussions of these topics in the standard reference work of
the field. That has been a very gratifying undertaking. The other thing was the chance to
assemble a team of colleagues for the editorial board. Our field is rich with talent, expertise,
and personality, but I feel particularly fortunate to have secured the collaboration of the
individuals who agreed to join the board of associate editors and consulting editors of the
fourth edition of Bioethics. Working with them has been one of the high points of my career.
The thousands of hours they have devoted to preparing this edition are exceeded only by the
tens of thousands of hours put in by the hundreds of authors who have contributed the
articles.

Editorial Board. The development of this fourth edition of Bioethics was facilitated by a new
editorial board consisting of Lisa Eckenwiler, Gregory E. Kaebnick, Barbara Koenig,
Sheldon Krimsky, Stephen R. Latham, and Mark R. Mercurio. These scholars were selected
because their insight and expertise—in medicine, science, law, social science, history,
philosophy, and education—were essential to achieve the goals of the new edition. I aimed
and was successful at recruiting colleagues who are unusually broad in their intellectual
scope and interests and who care deeply about the service that bioethics can provide to
enhance human rights and justice and to alleviate suffering. The editor in chief and the
editorial board were responsible for the intellectual planning of the fourth edition, including
all decisions about contents and authorship, as well as for reviewing and approving all
manuscripts.

Consultants. Joseph J. Fins and Bruce D. White served as editorial consultants and
reviewed selected articles. Naomi Scheinerman updated article bibliographies and developed
materials for various appendices. Therese Jones and Delese Wear edited and provided new
material for the annotated bibliography of literature and health care.

Publishing Staff. The day-to-day work of preparing the fourth edition entailed close
collaboration with the publisher’s team in New York and Michigan. None of this work
would have been possible without a publisher able to efficiently implement the intellectual
plan. The Macmillan team commissioned all the articles, maintained contact with all
authors, coordinated reviews, copyedited all manuscripts, checked revised manuscripts and
bibliographies, and prepared all materials for production. In particular, Hélène G. Potter,
Associate Publisher, Macmillan Reference USA, an imprint of Cengage Learning, provided
vision and managerial insight for the development of the fourth edition—as well as many
thoughtful perspectives. Similarly, Alja Kooistra and Andrea Henderson, Senior Content
Project Editors, Macmillan Reference USA, an imprint of Cengage Learning, provided
excellent leadership in implementing all the operational aspects of the project.

Bruce Jennings
Editor in Chief, Fourth Edition
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