

# Introduction

The planning meeting for this volume took place in March 2021 and, for the second year in a row, was virtual, at a time when mass vaccination against COVID-19 was just getting underway. When the meeting was planned, in March 2020, we had hoped to meet in person, in Vancouver, and our set of talented Editorial Committee Guest Members partially reflect that plan. Needless to say, we did not get to Vancouver, and it would be another two years before we would be able to meet in person. Having now done the experiment of three virtual meetings and, finally, early in 2023, a meeting in person, I can attest to the many advantages of meeting in person, even with the complications of air travel. That said, I thank all of those who participated in this meeting, not to mention the authors, for providing us with what I think is a volume that truly reflects the breadth of microbiological science. One focus in this volume includes studies of bacteria and eukaryotic microbes in their natural environments, over geologic time and space. This includes reviews on the early fossil record of eukaryotes—the evolution of bacteria and archaea as they encountered new habitats. An article on fungi in glacial and hypersaline waters demonstrates the adaptations that have evolved to deal with these hostile environments; another looks at the nature of the microbiome community living on soil surfaces.

In addition to the important contributions from our Guest Members, we welcomed Jason Stajich onto the Editorial Committee, and convinced Andrew Goodman to become an Associate Editor. Leslie Parker managed both the Zoom meeting and, critically, the assembly of this volume. We are particularly excited to have this volume of the *Annual Review Microbiology* be the first to be published open access, and we very much look forward to the new audiences that this is likely to bring to our reviews.

Susan Gottesman  
Editor