Dear Friends and Colleagues,

When I joined Basic in 2005, publishing was a different world than it is now. If people listened to audiobooks at all, they listened on cassettes. Kindle didn’t exist yet. We all had our own offices, not desks in open-plan workspaces. And we sold and publicized our books using printed seasonal catalogs.

I loved those catalogs, and I still have a huge stack of them from my years at Basic. They’re a wonderful way of chronicling the evolution of the house. Collectively, they offer a history of both the exhilarating successes and humiliating flops that make up any publishing career. And from 9/11 to the Mars rover to gay marriage to Donald Trump, they are also a great reminder of the preoccupations of the last two decades.

Even if the sales department no longer uses a printed catalog to sell books, nor the publicity department to promote them, I continue to value the catalogs much the same way I do the printed book (no audio books or ebooks for me, thank you very much).

Welcome, then, to our first annual Basic Books catalog, in which you will find a mixture of the backlist classics that are still some of our bestselling titles, books we published more recently, and a selection of titles upcoming in 2024.

What you will see, I hope, is that while many things in publishing have changed, Basic’s commitment to publishing excellence remains unwavering.

Yours,

Lara Heimert
Publisher, Basic Books
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AFRICAN EUROPEANS
AN UNTOLD HISTORY
OLIVETTE OTELE

ASSYRIA
THE RISE AND FALL OF THE WORLD’S FIRST EMPIRE
ECKART BRAHM

BEYOND THE WALL
A history of East Germany
Katja Noyer

RACHAEL CRASILIT
BISMARCK’S WAR
THE FRANCO-PRUSSIAN WAR AND THE MAKING OF MODERN EUROPE

BLOODLANDS
EUROPE BETWEEN HITLER AND STALIN
TIMOTHY GUTHRIE

CHILDREN OF ASH AND ELM
NEIL PRICE

THE COLD WAR
A WORLD HISTORY
ODD ARNE WESTAD

Consider the Fork
A HISTORY OF HOW WE COOK AND EAT
BEE WILSON

DOMINION
HOW THE CHRISTIAN REVOLUTION CHANGED THE WORLD
TOM HOLLAND
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INFORMATION, INFLUENCE, & PERSUASION THROUGH THE ART OF STORYTELLING
ANNETTE SIMMONS

THE TYRANNY OF EXPERTS
ECONOMISTS, DICTATORS, AND THE FORGOTTEN RIGHTS OF THE POOR
WILLIAM EASTERLY

10 BASIC BOOKS
MEET THE EDITORS
LARA HEIMERT
SVP, PUBLISHER, THE BASIC BOOKS GROUP (Basic, Seal, PublicAffairs, & Bold Type)
LARA.HEIMERT@HBGUSA.COM

Lara Heimert joined Basic Books in 2005. Previously, she was publisher of the trade division at Yale University Press. She has published numerous prize-winning and New York Times–bestselling titles. Highlights include Edward Baptist’s The Half Has Never Been Told, Eugene Rogan’s The Fall of the Ottomans, Timothy Snyder’s Bloodlands, Victor Davis Hanson’s The Dying Citizen, and Neil Price’s Children of Ash and Elm. A graduate of Princeton University, Lara acquires primarily in the field of history.

BRIAN J. DISTELBERG
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Brian J. Distelberg joined Basic Books in 2015 and acquires primarily in history. Books he has edited and published include the New York Times bestsellers Slouching Towards Utopia, by Brad DeLong, and Myth America, edited by Kevin Kruse and Julian Zelizer; Jefferson Cowie’s Freedom’s Dominion, winner of the Pulitzer Prize; Eckart Frahm’s Assyria; and Martha Jones’s Vanguard. He also publishes a select number of books in politics, where highlights include Jonathan Metzl’s Dying of Whiteness and Jonathan Sacks’s Morality. Brian worked previously at Harvard University Press and holds a PhD in US history from Yale University.

THOMAS KELLEHER
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Thomas Kelleher joined Basic Books in 2009 and publishes predominantly in science and mathematics. Highlights include Lucy Cooke’s Bitch, William MacAskill’s New York Times–bestselling What We Owe the Future, Eugenia Cheng’s Is Math Real?, Adam Becker’s What Is Real?, Stephon Alexander’s The Jazz of Physics, and Judea Pearl’s The Book of Why. He is also responsible for the publishing program surrounding The Feynman Lectures on Physics.
Brandon Proia joined Basic Books in 2023 and acquires primarily in history. Before joining Basic, he was an executive editor of history at UNC Press, where he published books including Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor’s Race for Profit, Johanna Fernández’s The Young Lords, and Kelly Lytle Hernández’s City of Inmates.

Eric Schmidt joined Basic Books in 2024 and acquires primarily in the history and cultures of the premodern world. Before joining Basic, he was the ancient history editor at University of California Press, where he published books including Great Kingdoms of Africa, King and Emperor: A New Life of Charlemagne, and Hoof Beats: How Horses Shaped Human History, as well new translations of Homer’s Illiad and Odyssey and The Complete Haiku of Matsuo Basho.

Emily Taber joined Basic Books in 2022. She acquires in the social sciences, particularly in economics, business, sociology, public policy, politics, and law. Previously, she was the economics, finance, and business editor at the MIT Press, where she published books including Winning the Right Game by Ron Adner, Fighting Corruption Is Dangerous by Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, How Change Happens by Cass Sunstein, and Inclusion on Purpose by Ruchika Tulshyan.

Michael Kaler joined Basic Books in 2020 and acquires primarily in history and politics. Books he has acquired or edited include Jared Farmer’s Elderflora, Matthew Dallek’s Birchers, and Hein de Haas’s How Migration Really Works. Before joining Basic, Michael worked at Liveright and New York magazine.
Since its founding in 1950, Basic Books has shaped public debate by publishing award-winning books in history, science, sociology, psychology, politics, and current affairs. Basic’s list of influential authors includes Akhil Amar, Isaac Asimov, Edward Baptist, H.W. Brands, Arthur Brooks, Zbigniew Brzezinski, Iris Chang, George Church, Niall Ferguson, Richard Feynman, Richard Florida, Sigmund Freud, Howard Gardner, Victor Davis Hanson, Jonathan Haidt, Judith Herman, Christopher Hitchens, Douglas Hofstadter, Leszek Kolakowski, Kevin Kruse, Claude Levi-Strauss, Alice Miller, Robert Nozick, Jean Piaget, Steven Pinker, Samantha Power, Diane Ravitch, Eugene Rogan, Timothy Snyder, Thomas Sowell, Nicholas Stargardt, Beverly Daniel Tatum, Eric Topol, Sherry Turkle, Michael Walzer, George Weigel, Bee Wilson, James Q. Wilson, Richard Wrangham, and Irvin Yalom.

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