At the Sociology of Sport Journal (SSJ) Editorial Board meeting held in Montreal in April 2022, I set the agenda to brainstorm whether and how the Board wanted to recognize and acknowledge the 40th anniversary of the journal. Anniversaries provide the opportunity to reflect on the past and envision the future. We had a productive conversation, and several ideas were discussed. One question that emerged was how to recognize and acknowledge the journal’s past and the broader history of the field of sociology of sport without reproducing the exclusion of scholars who are marginalized by systemic forms of inequality. Concerns of diversity, equity, and inclusion have been forefront of the journal and the North American Society for the Sociology of Sport since I have been involved with SSJ and NASSS (and I imagine even earlier). Both the journal and the professional organization continue to strive towards inclusion and diverse representation, yet we are not always successful in this effort. It was a priority for the Editorial Board that in whatever ways we acknowledged the journal’s anniversary, it was aligned with our commitments to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

The Editorial Board asserted the importance of a forward-looking approach to the 40th anniversary, highlighting the work of emerging scholars and focusing on the future of the sociology of sport. After considering various ideas on how we might do so, the Board landed on what you are reading today, the Special Anniversary Issue, “‘Futures—Past,’ A Reflection of 40 Years of the Sociology of Sport Journal.” Dr. Letisha Brown expressed interest in taking the lead on developing the proposal and assembled a group of emerging scholars to join her in guest editing this issue: Drs. Chen Chen, Tomika Ferguson, Courtney Szto, Anthony Weems, and Natalie Welch. The Guest Editors were at the helm during all stages of the editorial process, including determining the focus of the issue and its four major themes—liberation, futurity, intersectionality, and interdisciplinarity. As the Guest Editors note in their introduction, the four themes are “critical to the current moment with respect to the study of sport, physical culture, and the physically (active) body.” As such, the articles in this Special Issue represent the futures of the field, written by emerging scholars, representing diversity in its myriad forms. The Special Issue, from my vantage as Editor, also serves the goal of professional development and socialization of emerging scholars, who represent the next generation of leadership in the journal and the field. Indeed, the Guest Editors solicited papers, identified and invited reviewers, conducted reviews, and made editorial recommendations (all of the responsibilities of being Editor of the journal).

In addition to the Special Issue, the journal acknowledges its past through the “Top 40 at 40” lists that have been published on the journal website throughout the year. These lists provide a snapshot into the articles published in the journal that have been widely cited and thus had an impact on the field. In her book Living a Feminist Life Sarah Ahmed, feminist scholar, writer, and activist, offers important insights on the politics of citation. For Ahmed (2017), “citation is how we acknowledge our debt to those who came before; those who helped us find our way when the way was obscured because we deviated from the paths we were told to follow.” (p. 15–16). She encourages us to think beyond texts that become ‘canonical’ and to “question how these histories happen, how selections are made; we need to ask who or what does not survive these selections.” (p. 17). As Editor my hope is that in creating visibility of the journal’s history, we will create spaces to consider the politics of citation and elicit productive conversations that help move the journal and field forward in its commitments to equity, diversity, inclusivity, and belonging. The Special Anniversary issue representing the ‘futures—past’ of the journal is one way to realize that commitment.

This Special Issue, the Guest Editors, and the scholars whose worked is featured present a compelling vision for the future of SSJ and of the field of sociology of sport. I want to thank the Guest Editors for their time, labor, and investment in putting together this engaging and diverse collection of scholars and scholarship. The articles in the Special Issue make me excited about the future of the journal, as the next generation of scholars pushes scholarly inquiry in innovative directions! I look forward to where the next 40 years takes us!

References