

THE SHAPE OF THE RIVER

THE SHAPE OF THE RIVER

LONG-TERM CONSEQUENCES OF CONSIDERING RACE IN COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY ADMISSIONS

WITH A FOREWORD BY GLENN C. LOURY

William G. Bowen and Derek Bok

IN COLLABORATION WITH

*James L. Shulman, Thomas I. Nygren, Stacy Berg Dale,
and Lauren A. Meserve*

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY PRESS PRINCETON, NEW JERSEY

Copyright © 1998 by Princeton University Press
Published by Princeton University Press, 41 William Street,
Princeton, New Jersey 08540
In the United Kingdom: Princeton University Press,
Chichester, West Sussex

All Rights Reserved

Second printing, and first paperback printing, 2000

Paperback ISBN 0-691-05019-8

The Library of Congress has cataloged the cloth edition
of this book as follows

Bowen, William G.

The shape of the river : long-term consequences of considering
race in college and university admissions / William G. Bowen and
Derek Bok ; in collaboration with James L. Shulman . . . [et al.].
p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0-691-00274-6 (cloth : alk. paper)

1. Universities and colleges—United States—Admission—
Case studies. 2. Affirmative action programs—United States—
Case studies. 3. Afro-Americans—Education (Higher)—
Case studies. 4. Afro-American college graduates—Case studies.

I. Bok, Derek Curtis. II. Title.

LB 2351.2.B696 1998

378.1'61'0973—dc21

98-19900

This book has been composed in New Baskerville

The paper used in this publication meets
the minimum requirements of ANSI/NISO Z39.48-1992
(R1997) (*Permanence of Paper*)

[http:// pup.princeton.edu](http://pup.princeton.edu)

Printed in the United States of America

9 10 8

ISBN-13: 978-0-691-05019-5

ISBN-10: 0-691-05019-8

“You’ve got to know the shape of the river perfectly. It is all there is left to steer by on a very dark night. . . .”

“Do you mean to say that I’ve got to know all the million trifling variations of shape in the banks of this interminable river as well as I know the shape of the front hall at home?”

“On my honor, you’ve got to know them better.”

—Mark Twain, *Life on the Mississippi*

