

ASTROLOGY AT THE MILLENNIUM

Thank you so much for asking me to be your keynote speaker. It is a privilege to speak to you who are my colleagues, as well as those of you who want to join the ranks of professional astrologers. My topic is *Astrology at the Millennium*, but I cannot just tell you a joyful tale of optimistic expectations, I must also share some of my deep worries with you. I hope you will not be disappointed, but this keynote address is not going to be about a lot of answers. Instead I am going to pose many questions. Being very involved in our community, I know what some of the problems are, I may even have a few ideas as to how to solve them, but no pat answers. We as a community at large will have to get together and find the answers.

I would like to start today's address with the same words I used to end my talk in Annapolis: I am coming to the end of my journey in astrology but I hope that there are many of you here and out there who will continue the good fight to make today's astrology better so that by the turn of the century we can each say: **I am proud to be an astrologer!**

So let me ask you the first question: **#1)** What do we, today's astrologers, want astrology to be? An art? A pseudo-science? A predictive tool? A helping tool? A counseling tool? Do we want it to be part of the ancient mysteries? Metaphysical? Mythological? Religious? Or technical and businesslike? Can we, in a democratic way, combine all the above or will we end up in a pastiche leaving everybody confused?

With my personal vision, tinged by a Sagittarian Ascendant, I feel that there

are ways to retain all of the above **IF**, and that's a big "if," we can all agree to set certain standards as to what astrology requires. Practice, and yes, it may need certain exams, tests, maybe even licenses. If we continue to let everyone hang out a shingle saying "Astrologer" or worse yet, Psychic Readings, Tarot, Astrology, Aura Reading and more -- well, then we will go down the drain.

Already the wolves are waiting at the door. Pop astrology is becoming ever more popular and with it the "*more righteous than thou*" group, including scientists, are getting restless. Urged on by the likes of *The Amazing Randi* and *Psychops*, we are getting immolated by the scientific world in order to stop people like us from searching for truth within and without. We can only withstand the attacks if we become united and all pull in one direction.

Let me give you a small example of what is said about us: *Astrology is neither harmless nor fun and we should see it as an enemy of truth*, says Richard Dawkins a professor in Oxford, England. Why, he asks, *do so many indulge in these pre-Copernican dabblings which are nothing short of wicked fraud?... We should fight astrology seriously instead of humoring it as a piece of harmless fun.... To ask whether the astrologers themselves believe in evidence*, he continues, *some are foolish enough to believe anything. One astrologer states Dawkins, met Patric Walker "just before Mercury went retrograde and immediately recognized him from a past life."*

According to Dawkins *even serious newspapers who would never have anything to do with such tabloid stuff, are now flirting with astrology*. He continues his diatribe by deriding astrologers' description of *Uranus moving into Aquarius*, pointing out that *Aquarius is a miscellaneous set of stars all at different distances from earth, which have no connection with each other except that they constitute a meaningless pattern when seen from a certain place and is not an*

entity which Uranus or anything else can sensibly said to "move into." Dawkins asserts that astrology demeans astronomy by shriveling and cheapening the universe with its dabblings. It is even an insult to the science of psychology and the richness of human personality. The good professor feels that the Trade Descriptions Act which protects people from manufacturers making false claims for their products should be applied against astrologers and drive them out of business. Or better yet, why not jail them for fraud? Lovely, isn't it? It seems that this article is being circulated all over England.

Another recent case took place right here in Southern California when Orange County went Chapter 11 thanks to risky investments, better known as speculations. Treasurer Citron was reviled and berated and accused of mishandling the moneys for many years. Under closer scrutiny, the press also discovered that Citron consulted an astrologer as well as a psychic. The sad part was not that friends, officials or the media questioned the good or bad advice he received -- no, the immediate reaction was "How could Orange County possibly entrust a serious job such as County Treasurer to this type of person who listens to such trash."

So to question #2) What are we, the astrologers, doing to our own metier and our reputation? How much longer can we hide behind individualism, uniqueness and Uranian or Neptunian characteristics? Can all of you recall how many people smirked when some avant guard folks raved about acupuncture? "Who can believe that you can be cured by being poked with needles" was the average person's reaction. This was not very long ago, yet today acupuncture is a respected and accepted element of the medical field. Treatments are covered by insurance and often recommended by doctors. No more smirking or snickering. And why? Because they all pooled their resources as well as their knowledge and developed a base of information to describe their field, what they must know in order to call

themselves acupuncturists, a springboard to testing, licensing and university degrees. They, like astrologers, came from many diverse backgrounds and totally different approaches, yet they succeeded.

Of course I don't even need to remind you that psychologists only got their act together less than 75 years ago. Their reputation of being mesmerizers and dangerous, or at best useless charlatans to be sneered at, died down quickly when psychology became an important part of university teaching, when there was a body of knowledge called psychology which could be learned, studied and graduated with.

Couldn't we do the same thing? Are we masochists at heart or is the old guard so afraid of failing a test? For heaven's sake, most of them would qualify under the grandfather clause, because we do need a lot of "grandfathers" in order to collect enough money to even hire the experts we need to guide us. If you remember, we had a very revealing questionnaire called *PROJECT FOCUS*, run most skillfully by Jan Tunney. But what has happened since? Who is putting up all the roadblocks we seem to encounter along the way? Don't be mistaken, there is tremendous resistance to categorizing astrology or astrologers. Yet we know that even the manicurist around the corner must prove that she knows how to file nails, to apply nail polish and how to disinfect her tools. We, as astrologers, can forecast that Mary and Joe will divorce. Not that they may argue, or might separate, no! It is stated as a fact because, after all, Uranus is transiting Mary's 7th house. Please, can you be surprised if the public objects? How many horror stories have you heard from clients who have had encounters with unskilled or unethical astrologers?

And where (this by the way is my question #3) where is the leadership of the large and supposedly meaningful astrological organizations, such as is apparent

in other professional organizations like the AMA or ABA? I'm not only talking of the AFA which we all think of as a dinosaur, but also of AFAN, ISAR and NCGR. Every year we seem to become more political and less community concerned. *What's in it for me, can it further my career and standing* seems to be more important than how we can further astrology in order to elevate its status as well as how to bring in new blood. Every year instead of solidifying our common base there seems to be more backbiting between the groups. And yet without their leadership, we cannot advance. By the way, this same syndrome seems to prevail in Europe as well as South America, Australia and other places in the world. We all need to pull the wagon in one direction. This world has become so small that we all need each other.

Question #4) So where are we now in relationship to the millennium just four years away? Not too far along when it comes to defining Astrology and getting it out of the Sun Sign craze into the serious art and helpful tool it is, could be, should be and was before. But we have made some positive moves in the right direction and we should keep those in mind as well as our problem areas.

There are quite a few significant signals pointing in the right direction. Look at the last ProSig conference held in November 1994 in Annapolis and this one here. Take into consideration the excellent topics presented: this morning you have already discussed consulting styles, how to expand your astrological practice, how to deal with bookkeeping and the IRS and many other 'should know' topics, such as how much to charge. Of course that was just this morning; there are so many other important subjects that will be covered, subjects that all point to not only help you to become proficient, but to become professional in your work. And that is what we need more of, places to **learn** how to become real astrologers. By the way, do read *Donna Cunningham's* outstanding book called *The*

Consulting Astrologer's Guidebook which covers some of the same territory and should be 'must reading' for all of us. So call that **Strike One.**

Of course the whole idea is that we must learn how to treat our discipline as a profession or career, one that enables us to pay the rent and pursue a normal lifestyle. We need to move away from treating astrology as a hobby with which to make a few extra dollars on the side while we 'work' at making a 'real' living. I am not talking of blatant advertising or publicity, but professional behavior. If we all pull together, we can embrace the threshold of professionalism in Astrology, a formerly revered and honored field, where many of us should be able to make a real living.

UAC proved the point that professional astrologers **can** be part of the faculty at a convention and instead of paying registration and their room as they do at the AFA - au contraire - they get a free room and registration, plus, on a profit-sharing basis, a remuneration for their work. So far the last three UACs have enabled the faculty to get great exposure and free advertising without loss of income. Most smaller conferences have followed UAC's lead. I'll call that **Strike Two.**

Look at the vast improvement in our astrological literature. Of course you can find trashy, poorly written or even erroneous books, but that goes for other fields too. I am proud to say that serious teaching books, such as *The Only Way to learn Astrology* series are not only carried by metaphysical bookstores, but can be found in every Dalton, Waldenbook, Barnes and Noble and so on. And look at other serious astrological authors who are featured by those same stores: Rob Hand, Liz Green, Steven Arroyo, Karen Hamaker-Zondag, Noel Tyl, the Hubers and many more. Why? Because some of the better publishers are putting out good quality books, and, living up to the *Supply and Demand* theory - because they

sell! The public at large is ready to help themselves to grow, to expand their horizons, to look for alternatives and Astrology can be such an alternative. I'll call this **Strike Three**.

We have made tremendous strides in our technical applications. Thanks to the phenomenal advances in computers, astrologers can delve into many new directions and base their prognostications on facts rather than fiction. I'm particularly referring to some of the financial research, where, at the flick of a key, you can see what happened astrologically in 1929 when the stock market crashed or check if Saturn's cycle has any relationship to the gold or silver curbs and any other intriguing possibilities. Many astrologers have made good inroads into the financial field, some openly like Arch Crawford and Ray Merriman, others who have successful financial newsletters use astrology but don't necessarily acknowledge that fact. So call it **Strike Four**

Of course there is the Gauquelin research, still not fully recognized by all scientists, but hard to really deny, even by the most critical ones. Definitely **Strike Five**. Whether you believe in the Mars effect for athletes or the lunar position for writers, the Gauquelins, using more than 30,000 timed horoscopes, contributed a lot to the validity of astrology.

Which brings us to another question, namely #5). What does the **VALIDITY** of Astrology mean. What is valid and what is not? Look at some synonyms and you will get my drift. Is it **lawful**? Not in every state in this country! Is it **effective**? Of course, if you expect it to work. Is it **exact**? I hope not to the minute, I would hate to see people slaves to hours and minutes, but yes, when in a cyclic or approximate motion. Is it **acceptable**? Well, obviously not to Professor Dawkins or his ilk, but 'yes' to millions who seek answers. Is it **reasonable**? To those who can accept that there is more than the eye can

perceive, it is very easy to understand that the relationship of the Moon to the tides, or the flare-ups of sunspots to communication disturbances, is no different than Venus to my own sense of beauty or Mars in Aries egging me on. If there are some invisible connections, why not others. Who can deny that, if a hundred years ago, I had insisted that some waves were passing through this room and you could catch them in a little box and hear music or voices, not to even mention, see pictures, you would have put me in a loony bin. So much for *reasonable* and any of the other meanings comprised in the word *valid*.

So, question #6 asks: Is astrology a science? Should it be *proven valid* in scientific terms? Or is it an **art of interpretation**, thus depending on the ability, intuition, knowledge and background of the astrologer? Can it be learned as you learn mathematics or is it more like medicine where you study all you need in order to become a doctor, yet to be a good diagnostician you should have a special intuitive gift that has to be added to the scientific side of medicine -- thus to diagnose is an art.

Nick Campion, in Llewellyn's anthology called "*Astrology looks at History*", has a brilliant chapter where he divides astrology into two forms. One, called *Natural Astrology* which rests in the world of observable cycles and influences which requires the observation of exact data and minimize our own individual preconceptions. The other, called *Judicial Astrology*, allows for much greater input from the astrologer, especially if the goal is to impart meaning rather than precise predictions. *Judicial Astrology*, as Campion states, *is very much a language of consciousness, a form of poetry in which the astrologer extracts meaning from the natural phenomena of astronomy and imparts that to others.*

Personally I feel that both types of astrology are important, and who does what and when does not matter as long as we know that the astrologer is **well trained**

If we accept Astrology as one of the helpful disciplines, then the client should receive what he or she needs at that point in time.

Question #7. Let's tackle another much used or abused word, namely *Do you 'believe' in Astrology?* My friend and partner Joan McEvers, when asked if she believes in astrology, always answers with a sharp "NO, I use astrology as a tool." And of course she is quite right. Many people confuse astrology with a belief system which it is not at all what it is supposed to be. Maybe some religions, especially catholicism, seem to equate astrology with a message from the devil. I am not sure if this fear dates back to the old times where astrologers were respected advisers to kings and other sundry rulers, and priests felt threatened by the knowledgeable, usually erudite men who could tell if and when an appropriate time for waging war existed, if a famine or other disaster might strike. If these astrologers knew something that they, the priests and messengers of God, did not know, then of course these individuals must have been sent by Satan. By spreading those rumors the catholic hierarchy could also get rid of those who might usurp their own power and influence.

Whatever the reason, astrology is not and should not be a religion or even a belief system. There is an empirical body of knowledge handed down to us from thousands of years ago, to which is added a lot of new knowledge gained in this century, partly through psychology as to what makes humanity "humane." There are many technical advances that facilitate our craft. Through astrology we have been able to help others, and by doing so, help ourselves to get to know who we are and what we need to feel fulfilled. Whether you consult with clients or counsel them (if you are competent to do so), if you discuss their abilities, talents or characteristics as seen in the birthchart, or whether you confer with them about next year's potential - if you describe a possible relationship between them and others - if you answer a horary question or elect a specific

date, whether you project an economic picture or the weather forecast, the future of a country or compare astrological symbols to mythological ones, all of it is part of astrology, yet none of it has anything to do with religion.

Where as astrologers are we at this critical time? Critical not because a century as well as a thousand year cycle are finishing - critical because history always records such momentous occasions and thus astrology too will be recorded and evaluated. One important thing is happening right now, namely *Project Hindsight*, an absolutely perfect occurrence as far as timing is concerned, telling us to not only look forward, but also to remember what has been, to not throw the baby out with the bathwater, but keep that which can be helpful for the future; to learn how to use some of the old techniques and apply them to the present. Call it **Strike six** for positives.

Another crucial milestone is the **Internet**. Call it definitely a positive **Strike seven**. A truly phenomenal event bringing astrologers of the whole world together eliminating any feeling of distance. Just last week Tees Reisma from Holland sent me, via e-mail, ten pages of astrological 'events' from now through the rest of the year. Now really, I find out what is going on here in Los Angeles, namely this ProSig conference, via Holland! Don't you love it? As some of you know, we've been working with much of Europe, Russia, Australia, South Africa, some of Asia and South America for many years, mainly under the cover of a group called ARC, exchanging ideas, meeting information, research and all things of interest to all of us. Now what has been but a dream, can really happen. We as Americans are particularly lucky, since English seems to become the internationally accepted language, just as it is in the air traffic field.

There are a few other areas that may need clarification in the next few years, areas that are really neither positives nor negatives, but new ways of handling

our daily lives, expectations of how we should be treated and how we visualize our future. An important aspect is our **monetary expectations** for work performed versus our time donated for a so-called good cause. My question #8) is: Where is the fine line of feeling exploited versus living up to what President Bush used to call *100 points of light*, formerly a vital part of the American way of life? Where is the dividing point between what we do professionally versus what we do for love of our profession, namely volunteerism? Can we ever bring Astrology into the mainstream of professionalism, the kind listed under *Career Guidelines*, when we devote only part time to teaching it, when our students do not have to pay school tuition for a course, but are allowed to pay piecemeal class by class? Can we publish professional magazines and newsletters when our editors and staff are volunteers or only get token remuneration? In fact can we run our conferences and conventions based on prototypes set by the PTA or church ladies?

If we really want to teach properly, issue excellent magazines and produce top-notch conferences, we need a professional staff and that means paying real money, not pennies per hour but dollars. Real teaching also involves setting the same standards I've talked about before. Real teaching means to write real curricula for University teaching in order to get back to where we once were and what we lost along the way, namely something that was part of everybody's knowledge, part of a classical education. **Kepler College** in Seattle is trying to do that, and they've made giant strides into the right direction, but they need money in order to get ahead.

So here we are again, facing the same old problems you've heard me talk about time and time again. Namely astrologers' **poverty consciousness**. Not only do we pride ourselves on being "*different*", but we are embarrassed to get paid. It's against our *religion*. We must be do-gooders, walk barefoot, flagellate ourselves

or somehow atone for non-committed sins. At least that's the way we seem to act when it comes to money. I enjoy my lifestyle and have absolutely no problem in asking for and receiving good money. The poor soul whose horoscope you interpreted for free, because he/she is broke, has paid no attention to anything you said. That same poor soul who has to scrounge in order to get your expected fee together is going to tape every word you've said, plus make notes, plus pay attention, plus be forever grateful because you've reduced your usual fee by a certain percentage.

There are so many other issues at stake that need to be discussed in order to reach certain goals before the year 2000. Obviously I don't have time to go into all of them now, but let me touch upon what we now call **SEACHANGES** to give you some food for thought.

Within the next few years our work habits will probably totally change. Because of computers, many offices will probably act as headquarters, while workers will stay at home being linked by and communicating through the computer. A slew of new cottage industries are likely to develop, all operated from the home. Most of you have already seen the beginnings of this revolutionary way of living. **BACK TO THE FUTURE** could be the title. Where we once lived in small villages, interconnected by narrow streets, we are now interconnected by a **superhighway**, interconnected through a machine. Where we once lived in a large type of family compound, we soon may live in near isolation, unless we have family of our own, usually an intimate group of husband, wife and child or children. Where we once rejected the small village or family compound as too gossipy and too little privacy, we uprooted ourselves and fled into the large cities where we could get lost in the crowds and "*do our own thing*".

Yet here we are, again leaving the bustle and excitement of that impersonal

city, choosing instead the restrictive, yet warm and cozy hearth. The good part, call it **Strike 8**, would be an automatic return of family values, and maybe with it some other cherished values. But my question **#9)** is: Where and how does astrology fit into this new picture? I'm not asking about astrologers communicating with each other, that would be automatic, no, I'm asking about Astrology per se. How do you visualize working with clients? How could you retain the personal contact, watch their body language, get their reactions to your statements? Will conferences or conventions still be mass gatherings, even more important than before in order to meet each other physically rather than electronically -- or will we be hooked up on a massive, worldwide networks and participate from home? As you can see, I have no answers, only questions, again and again, in the hope to make you think of where we are and where we should go.

Before I close, let me ask you a few vital questions: **#10)** How much of our **integrity** do we dare to give up in order to be truly part of the mainstream? Or can we be part of the mainstream and still retain that which sets us apart? Are we eager to prove our craft as being absolute truth or do we feel that nothing is absolute. The 20th century has taught us answers instead of asking questions.

Nobody forces people to think, instead we plunk ourselves in front of television and get the information chewed up and digested for us. By just accepting answers we have lost the art of observing. How many of us really observe the sky? We talk astrology as though it has nothing to do with nature, the stars, the universe. We accept time as though it has always been thus, becoming slaves to the tyranny of two hands on a clock, rarely realizing that time was not always linear, and that we as astrologers, more than anyone else, should realize that the horoscope is circular, based on earlier principles of cyclical motion, especially that of the Moon. Unlike linear time, cyclical time was like an unending circle where there was no beginning or end, where birth and death were

part of that continuous cycle. Ever since Hubble went into space, these and similar issues have been raised. We may go back to the future and therefore this is my last question #11) I know the theory fits well with astrology -- but are we ready to face that type of colossal seachange which will affect how the world views its existence?

I hope some of my questions as well as some of my ideas have resonated with you. Nobody expects quick answers, instead, stop once in a while and take time to think. You, the representatives of the next millennium are standing on the brink of tomorrow. Take the light of what we have learned from the 20th Century and use it to illuminate the future.