

## **JAMES RANDI – Bio Information**

James Randi is a retired professional magician (“The Amazing Randi”), author, lecturer, amateur archaeologist/astronomer. Born in 1928 in Toronto, Canada, where he received his high school education. He was naturalized a U.S. citizen in 1987, and now lives in Florida. He is single.

### **His books are:**

*The Truth About Uri Geller* (Prometheus Books, Buffalo, NY/82) (formerly *The Magic of Uri Geller* by Ballantine/75). Also published in the Peoples Republic of China. The first in-depth critical examination of the claims made by and for a conjuror who professed genuine psychic abilities and at one time convinced some scientists that such powers existed. Carl Sagan said of it: “Splendid! A witty and fascinating dissection of Uri Geller's humbuggery...a healthy antidote to charlatanism on all levels.”

*Houdini: His Life & Art* (Grosset & Dunlap, New York/78, co-authored). Biographical study of the famous American escape-artist and magician, Harry Houdini. Mr. Randi's contribution is limited to the last section of the book.

*Flim-Flam! – The Truth about Unicorns, Parapsychology & Other Delusions* (Harper & Row, NYC/80, paperback by Prometheus, NY/82). Examination of the “paranormal” from ESP to UFOs. The “psychic surgeons” of the Philippines, ancient astronauts and divining for water are all studied critically. Isaac Asimov wrote in the introduction, “Randi strikes back and when the pseudoscientists howl, he knows he’s hit the mark.” Norwegian edition 1994 (“Juks og Bedrag!”), Spanish edition by Tikal, Madrid, 1994 (“Fraudes Paranormales”), Polish edition 1994, cassette tape (extracts) edition 1995 by Prometheus, Italian edition “Fandonie,” 1999, Chinese edition, 2001, Punjabi edition, 2003.

*Test Your ESP Potential* (Dover/83). A workbook, complete with do-it-yourself testing procedures, test cards and statistical tables that enable readers to actually test scientifically for themselves whether psychic abilities exist. Soft cover.

*The Faith Healers* (Hardcover, 1987, and paperback, 1989, by Prometheus, NY). An exposé of the methods used by evangelists who claim to heal by divine touch. This book led to the imprisonment of two so-called faith healers. Routines followed by the fake healers are described and exposed. Follow-ups on the “healings” showed no results due to them. Highly lauded by critics. Chinese edition, 2001.

*The Magic World of the Amazing Randi* (Bob Adams, Boston/89). An illustrated book of how-to-do-it tricks for the amateur, with contributions from Blackstone, David Copperfield, Penn & Teller, and other professionals. For adults and children alike. English edition currently out of print. Spanish edition, Mexico, Selector, 1990. Chinese edition, 2001.

*The Mask of Nostradamus* (Scribner's, NY/90). A biographical study of the 16th-century seer

who turns out to be a Renaissance con-man with secrets that are revealed here. The most famous quatrains from Nostradamus are examined and shown to be examples of revision, misinterpretation, fraud, and wishful thinking by devotees of prophecy. Chicago Tribune calls the book “[an] imposing and fascinating investigation of the world's most famous visionary...*The Mask of Nostradamus* is an outstanding book, full and rich, a meticulous and thoughtful work of historical scholarship.” Paperback Prometheus, Buffalo, NY. French edition by Éditions Griot, 1994, as “Le Vrai Visage de Nostradamus.” Polish edition, 1994, “Nostradamus Bez Maski.” Italian edition, 2000. Chinese edition, 2001.

*James Randi: Psychic Investigator* (Boxtree, London/91). Based on the 1991 UK TV series. Phenomena (dowsing, crystal power, spiritualism, ESP, psychometry, auras, etc.) that were handled on the series, with a discussion of the author's experiences. Out of print.

*Conjuring* (St. Martin's Press, NY/1992) is a comprehensive (320-page) historical, biographical treatment of conjuring and conjurers. It is illustrated in color in “coffee-table” format. The Miami Sun-Sentinel said of *Conjuring*: “...a wonderful book. The text is rich enough, but it is complimented by superbly reproduced illustrations... a gorgeous book. And for some of us, it's indispensable.” Soft-cover edition by Quality Paperbacks. Korean edition, July 1994. Chinese edition, 2001.

*An Encyclopedia of Claims, Frauds, and Hoaxes of the Occult and Supernatural* (St. Martin's Press, NY/1995). A comprehensive treatment of definitions, origins and terminology used by occultists, parapsychologists and psychics, done from the skeptical point of view. It runs 282 pages and is illustrated throughout. Foreword by Sir Arthur C. Clarke, in which he says that the book is “not only informative but highly entertaining.” Said Dr. Clarke, “I regard Randi as a national treasure, and perhaps one of the remaining antidotes that may prevent the rotting of the American mind.” Paperback edition, 1997. UK edition (“The Supernatural, A to Z”) by Headline Press, 1995. Chinese edition, 2001.

*Wrong!* (being contracted) will deal with disastrous events in history, technological, political, scientific and ethical, that resulted from human ignorance, prejudice, miscalculation, misguided dependence on authority, fear, or plain stupidity. No publication date at present.

*A Magician in the Laboratory* (being contracted) will deal in detail with Mr. Randi's investigations of various pseudoscientific claims made by scientists from Canada to China. No holds barred, every hitherto hidden aspect of inquiries and discoveries will be revealed.

## Professional History:

Mr. Randi was host of The Randi Show on WOR-Radio, New York City (1966/67) and has had his own TV Specials in Australia, Belgium, Canada, England, Hungary, Italy, Japan, South Korea, and the USA. He has appeared in a great many TV documentaries, interview shows and variety productions in France, Germany, Japan, South Korea, Italy, the UK and other countries. He appears frequently on US television shows. He has done three world tours as a performer and lecturer through the Far East, Europe, Australia and North and South America. In 1974 he performed by special request at the White House. He spends much of his time traveling between performances and lectures all over the globe. A Granada TV series, *James Randi: Psychic Investigator* was shown in the UK in 1991. It dealt with testing of individuals who claim to have paranormal, supernatural or occult powers of various kinds. In 2003, a 14-episode TV series by Seoul Broadcasting Corp. with Mr. Randi as the host, was shown in South Korea offering his million-dollar prize.

He was a founding fellow of the Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal (CSICOP) based in Buffalo, NY. This organization of academics and other experts is devoted to the examination of paranormal, occult and supernatural claims. Non-profit, it serves the media, other scientific groups, and the public as an information source. Their journal is the *Skeptical Inquirer*, which reaches 40,000 subscribers. Mr. Randi also writes a column, "Twas Brillig," for *The Skeptic*, the journal of the Skeptic's Society, headquartered in California. He is editor of SWIFT, the online newsletter of the James Randi Educational Foundation (JREF) – to be seen at [www.randi.org](http://www.randi.org) – which was set up in 1996 in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, as a data source for educators, students, media, and researchers. The SWIFT web page receives thousands of hits a day from all over the world. The Foundation offers prizes and scholarships to students, conducts seminars and workshops, and also funds and originates selected, original parapsychological research. The JREF also offers a million-dollar prize – details to be found on the web page. An annual conference – The Amaz!ng Meeting – is held annually in January, featuring international speakers on a variety of topics.

Mr. Randi's writings (articles, essays, stories, book reviews) have appeared in major periodicals internationally. A few are:

Chicago Sun, Discovery, Experientia (Switzerland), Free Inquiry, The Humanist, Los Angeles Times, Nature, New Scientist, New York Times, Omni, Physics and Society, La Recherche, Science et Vie, Technology Review, Természet Világa (World of Nature, Hungary), TIME, Ulisse (Italy) and many other technical and popular publications including major newspapers. He has written articles and definitions for Encyclopedia Americana, Compton's Encyclopedia and the Encyclopaedia Britannica Medical & Health Annual. His articles are frequently picked up and translated for use in foreign popular and scientific periodicals.

James Randi has spoken for numerous schools, colleges, universities, and prominent organizations internationally, among them:

**USA:** 3M Labs, American Astronomical Society, American Cancer Society (thrice), American Association for the Advancement of Science (four times), American Physical Society (thrice), Bell Labs (several times), Cal Tech (several times), Cornell University (twice), Exxon Research Club, Fermi Lab (twice), Franklin Institute (Philadelphia), General Electric Labs, Goddard Space Flight Center, Harvard University, IBM's Sigma Xi, the JASONS, Johns Hopkins University, Los Alamos National Lab, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (four times), Mensa (local groups), Miller Institute, Museum of Science & Industry (Chicago), NASA, National Geographic Society, National Institute of Science & Technology, National Science Foundation (twice), National Science Teachers Association, National Security Agency, New York Academy of Sciences, Princeton University, RCA's David Sarnoff Research Center, Sandia Labs (twice), Smithsonian Institution (thrice), Summer Science Program (Ojai CA), Stanford Linear Accelerator Center, Stanford University, University of California at Berkeley (thrice), Talcott Mountain Science Center (twice), Westinghouse Research Club (twice), Yale University Law School. **AUSTRIA:** University of Linz. **BELGIUM:** University of Ghent. **CANADA:** Alberta Science Centre, McGill University, Royal Ontario Museum, McLaughlin Planetarium (Toronto). **CHINA:** Chinese Institute of Scientific & Technical Information (Beijing). **DENMARK:** Museum of Medical History, Nils Bohr Institute. **FINLAND:** Heureka Science Center (twice), University of Finland (twice), World Conference on Health Education/91. **GERMANY:** Academy of Sciences (G.D.R.), Academy of Berlin. **HUNGARY:** Brain Science Conference/1992, Neuroscience Society of Hungary. **NETHERLANDS:** Museon (The Hague), **NORWAY:** University of Oslo. **SOUTH AFRICA:** SciFest/97, **SWITZERLAND:** CERN (European Laboratory for Particle Physics (thrice), Koetser Foundation for Brain Research. **SWEDEN:** Luleå University of Technology, University of Stockholm (twice). **UK:** British Association for the Advancement of Science, Cambridge University, Oxford University, Liverpool University, Cardiff University, National Physical Lab (twice), Royal Institution. Also, scores of colleges around the world including Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, England, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, New Zealand, Norway, Peoples Republic of China, Portugal, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden and the USA.

Mr. Randi frequently speaks to medical societies and science teachers' organizations. He has taught at New York University (NYC) and at Brookdale Community College in New Jersey, was 1984 Regents Lecturer at the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA), and has conducted several seminars at other colleges in recent years.

The Fraud & Swindle School course for police officers conducted by the Office of the Attorney General of the State of Florida has featured lectures by James Randi on charity scams, fortune-telling and "psychic" operators in the state. The evaluation tallies turned in by attendees have consistently ranked this lecture very highly. James Randi serves as an expert witness and special consultant to lawyers, in the field of paranormal claims. The James Randi Educational Foundation offers support to those who have been attacked for their actions on behalf of rationality and against psychics, paranormalists, and occult claimants.



## MAJOR AWARDS AND HONORS

1977: James Randi was nominated as “Visiting Magician of the Year” by the **Academy of Magical Arts & Sciences** in the Magic Castle in Hollywood.

1981: Mr. Randi received a certificate of appreciation from the **MIT Club of Boston**, and the designation of **Grand Master of Magic** from Hocus Pocus Magazine.

1983: Mr. Randi received the Blackstone Cup of the **International Platform Association** as Outstanding Speaker in his category for his lecture, Science & the Chimera, and became the only second-time recipient of this award in 1987.

1984: The Bay **Surgical Society of Los Angeles** granted Honorary Membership to Mr. Randi following his lecture to the group on pseudoscience and quackery in medicine.

1986: Mr. Randi was made a Fellow of the prestigious **John D. & Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation**, an honor awarded him for his work in investigating claims of supernatural, occult and paranormal powers, in particular his exposures of the TV evangelist/healers and “psychics.” He received a grant of \$272,000 to assist him in these continuing endeavors. Also in 1986, the **Israeli Society for Promoting the Art of Magic** conferred membership on James Randi, and Assembly 22 of the **Society of American Magicians** gave him their Award of Merit: “in recognition of an outstanding contribution to the advancement of the Art of Magic and for exemplary promotion and defense of the Art of Magic.”

1987: **The Academy of Magical Arts & Sciences** in Los Angeles created a Special Fellowship for James Randi in recognition of his contributions to preservation of the art of conjuring as a form of entertainment, as opposed to the use of deception for purposes of fraud. Also in 1987, Ring 254 of the **International Brotherhood of Magicians** conferred upon him their Certificate of Appreciation: “for increasing community awareness of Magic’s contribution to society as shown in his recognition by the MacArthur Foundation.” He also received the **Society of American Magicians Award of Merit**.

1988: The **National Council Against Health Fraud** gave Mr. Randi their **National Consumer Service Award**: “in recognition of outstanding service to the community against health fraud, misinformation and quackery in harmony with the principles of the NCAHF.” Also in 1988, James Randi was appointed to the **Hall of Fame of the Society of American Magicians** (SAM). He was named an International Ambassador of Magic for the SAM, reporting to the Society from all over the world on developments in techniques and new talent discoveries. Mr. Randi also received a silver plaque from **The Magicians of Italy**.

1989: The **American Physical Society** presented James Randi with their **Forum Award**. The citation read: “For his unique defense of science and the scientific method in many disciplines, including physics, against pseudoscience, frauds and charlatans. His use of scientific techniques has contributed to refuting suspicious and fraudulent claims of paranormal results. He has contributed significantly to public understanding of important

issues where science and society interact.” Also in 1989, Mr. Randi was awarded the **Gold Medal of the University of Ghent, Belgium**, for his work in combating pseudoscience and quackery, and he received the **Book of the City of Ghent**, plus the **Medal of the City of Ghent**.

1990: The **American Humanist Association** gave Mr. Randi their **Humanist Distinguished Service Award**: “for his lifetime contributions to Humanism through the effective promotion of rationality and critical thinking.” The **Committee for Scientific Examination of Religion** (CSER) gave James Randi their 1990 **Distinguished Service Award** for his research into the fraudulent practices of faith healers and the legal actions against the evangelists that resulted from his work. The **Baton Rouge Proponents of Rational Inquiry & Scientific Methods** gave Mr. Randi their 1990 annual **Thomas Paine Award**: “For his unceasing campaign to expose charlatans, fakers, and other purveyors of unreason and illogic, the whole world over.”

1992: The **Hungarian Society for the Dissemination of Scientific Knowledge** awarded its highest decoration, the **Commemorative Medal with Golden Wreath**, to James Randi: “For his very successful activity and his enlightening efforts during several decades in the field of unmasking pseudoscientific beliefs.” The **Mu Epsilon Chapter of Phi Theta Kappa**, Miami-Dade Community College, recognized Mr. Randi: “For his contribution to Education and his tireless pursuit of Truth.” Mr. Randi was the 1992 **Isaac Asimov Lecturer** at the Asimov Seminar of the Rensselaerville Institute of New York.

1993: James Randi delivered the first **Koetser Memorial Lecture** in Zürich, Switzerland. The **Memorial Prize** was awarded him: “In recognition of his continuous efforts to educate the public on science, to make scientists more aware of methods and possible fallacies, and for his intellectual integrity in enlightening us.” In November 1993, James Randi was keynote speaker at the **European Week of Scientific Culture** in Lisbon, Portugal, and in Madrid, Spain. On October 19, 1993, the **PBS-TV “NOVA” program** broadcast a one-hour special titled “**Secrets of the Psychics**” dealing with Mr. Randi's life work, particularly with his investigations of “psychic” Uri Geller and various healing claims being made by evangelists in the USA and by scientists in Russia.

1994: In April, at the request of Dean Guido Calabresi, James Randi addressed the **Yale University Law School** as part of their “Science & the Law” seminar. It was only the third time that the Law School auditorium was filled to capacity for a speaker. Dean Calabresi wrote: “I am writing...to thank you for your wonderful discussion...Your presentation was a major boost for our TechLaw group. You certainly lived up to your reputation as an articulate, knowledgeable, and entertaining speaker....Your presentation was a great success!” Also in 1994, Mr. Randi received the **Florida Crime Prevention Training Conference Certificate of Appreciation**.

1995: A degree *honoris causa*, **Doctor of Humane Letters**, was awarded Mr. Randi from the University of Indianapolis. The citation read, in part: “James Randi, prolific author, lecturer,

and scientific investigator, celebrated MacArthur fellow, and truly amazing magician, your studies have exposed the falsities of pseudoscience, the paranormal, and the occult in order to enlighten the world to genuine science and the authentic powers of the intellect and spirit. In recognition of your scholarly investigations which have helped to define the boundary between true and false faith, between playful magic and the manipulation of quackery, in honor of your distinctive genius in the services of humanity....”

1996: The **International Astronomical Union** officially named a planetoid in honor of James Randi. Asteroid 3163/1981QM is now known as “Randi” and has an orbital period of 3.71 years and a magnitude of 17. The **Committee for Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal** gave Mr. Randi their **Distinguished Skeptic Award** in 1996.

1997: Mr. Randi gave the **Annual Isaac Asimov Memorial Lecture** for the **New York Area Skeptics Society**. The mayor of Miami, Florida, named Sept. 27th, 1997, “**James Randi Day**,” “for his outstanding contributions on behalf of humankind.” The Aventura Marketing Council noted the **Lifetime Achievement Award** given to “author, lecturer, and humanitarian” James Randi by the **International Brotherhood of Magicians**. Mr. Randi was honored by the Science & Engineering Society of the **National Security Agency**, Washington, D.C. In the December/97 Esquire Magazine, he was named “**One of the 100 Best People in the World**, people who make our lives richer or larger or happier,” sharing the honor with Nelson Mandela, Stephen Hawking, Bob Dylan – and Homer Simpson.

1999: The “**Comitato Italiano per il Controllo delle Affermazioni sul Paranormale**” gave their “**In Defense of Reason**” **Special Lifetime Achievement Award** to James Randi.

2000: Nova Southeastern University gave Mr. Randi their “**Distinguished Lecturer**” Award.

2002: The **International Brotherhood of Magicians** presented Mr. Randi with their “**Presidential Citation**.”

2003: The first annual **Richard Dawkins Award** was presented to Mr. Randi by the **Atheist Alliance International** at their conference in Clearwater, Florida. The citation read, in part: “Demonstrating a nontheist world view in a straightforward manner, Randi has combined entertainment and education while debunking charlatans who would encourage human ignorance.” The **Canadian Association of Magicians** gave James Randi their **Camaraderie Award** and honored him with an all-star banquet and show in celebration of his Canadian origins.

2004: Mr. Randi received the **Erwin Fischer Prize** from the **International League of Non-Religious and Atheists**, in Germany.

#### **THE ONGOING PRIZE**

For more than 25 years, Mr. Randi's prize of \$10,000 for “the performance of any paranormal, occult or supernatural event, under proper observing conditions” went unclaimed. A



syndicated television special for Lexington Broadcasting titled, “Exploring Psychic Powers – Live,” was broadcast June 7, 1989, and seen all over the USA, in Italy (with simultaneous translation) and in Australia. The \$10,000 prize was temporarily increased to \$100,000 for this occasion. The two-hour program was also seen later in Scandinavia, Japan, France, England and Germany. Currently, the prize amounts to \$1,000,000 – thanks to a donation from a patron. There are still no takers. The prize is now administered and guaranteed by the James Randi Educational Foundation, and held in the form of negotiable bonds in a special account.

See the “Profile” in TIME magazine, June 13, 1988, and the “Profile” in Scientific American Magazine, July, 1995. More can be found in most biographical listings, including any current **Who's Who in America, Who's Who in Entertainment, Who's Who in the East, Who's Who in the World**, and the **Cambridge Men of Achievement**.

The James Randi Educational Foundation (JREF) invites inquiries and applications for membership. Details are available on the Foundation website (see below). The JREF solicits grants, endowments, and donations as a 501(c)3 tax-exempt corporation, to continue the work internationally.

#### **CONTACTS:**

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