Foreword

When John Louis Emil Dreyer published the *New General Catalogue of Nebulae and Clusters of Stars* in 1888, he tried to bring some sense and order to the lists of William and John Herschel. Dreyer's seminal work formed the basis of our understanding of the Deep Sky from that day to this. The book you are now holding—Archinal and Hynes' *Star Clusters*, is as seminal a work, deserving a place in every observer's bookshelf right next to the *NGC* itself.

The reason this new book is so important is that especially with star clusters and asterisms (physically unrelated groupings of stars), there has been a tremendous amount of confusion. Uncertain positions have resulted in many clusters being misrepresented, misplotted on atlases, or simply lost altogether. Archinal and Hynes have done a spectacular job carefully sifting through the *NGC* and many modern lists, trying to pinpoint the existence, and the positions, of these important deep sky objects.

The care involved in producing this book resulted in its taking years to put together. I remember talking with Brent on several occasions spread over years, getting a sense of the progress that the authors and their publisher were making. Even with the use of modern computers, telescopes, and assistance by several first-rate observers, the project took so long that even Dreyer would have been impressed with their perseverance and with the time and care that went into it.

Handsomely illustrated with images of the more striking of the objects, this book is beautiful as well as utilitarian. It has also placed its authors as the *de facto* arbitrators for the additions of new objects. I found that out while comet hunting a few years ago, and picking up a unique circle of stars I wanted to call Wendee's ring after my wife. The object, listed in the catalogue as Levy-Wallach J2204.3+4508 for its J2000.0 position in the sky, looks like a near-perfect ring of 11th magnitude stars. It is listed along with J2108.8+0620 (an S-shaped grouping of stars I call Equuleus S), and J2340.6+5618 (Nanette's River). I am honored that these three asterisms take their place in this momentous work.

I recommend a slow dipping into the pages of this book over many cloudy nights. You will learn about clusters and asterisms in our own galaxy, globulars in other galaxies, and deep sky objects within the Magellanic Clouds and M 31 that you never imagined to exist. Then when the sky clears, you'll be able to go out and observe some of these objects. Far more than a catalog, this book is a journey to fabulous places in distant parts of space.

David H. Levy