

Michael J Fox

Michael J. Fox was born Michael Andrew Fox in 1961 to parents William and Phyllis in Edmonton, the capital of the Canadian province of Alberta. (He later adopted the "J" as an homage to legendary character actor Michael J. Pollard.) Fox, a self-described "Army brat," moved several times during his childhood along with his parents, brother, and three sisters. The Foxes finally planted roots in Burnaby, British Columbia (a suburb of Vancouver), when William Fox retired from the Canadian Armed Forces in 1971.

Like most Canadian kids, Fox loved hockey and dreamed of a career in the National Hockey League. In his teens, his interests expanded. He began experimenting with creative writing and art and played guitar in a succession of rock-and-roll garage bands before ultimately realizing his affinity for acting.

Fox debuted as a professional actor at 15, co-starring in the sitcom *Leo and Me* on Canadian Broadcasting Corp. (CBC) with future Tony Award-winner Brent Carver. Over the next three years, he juggled local theater and TV work, and landed a few roles in American TV movies shooting in Canada.

When he was 18, Fox moved to Los Angeles. He had a series of bit parts, including one in CBS' short-lived (yet critically acclaimed) Alex Haley/Norman Lear series *Palmerstown USA*, before winning the role of lovable conservative Alex P. Keaton on NBC's enormously popular *Family Ties* (1982-89). During Fox's seven years on *Ties*, he earned three Emmy Awards and a Golden Globe, making him one of the country's most prominent young actors.

Fox returned to series television in 1996 with ABC's *Spin City*, portraying Michael Flaherty, New York's deputy mayor. He won critical praise, garnering three Golden Globe Awards, one Emmy Award, three Emmy nominations, a *GQ* Man-of-the-Year Award (in the TV comedy category), a People's Choice Award, and two SAG Awards. During his time on the show, shot entirely in New York City, Fox did everything from galloping bareback through Central Park to jumping into the Hudson River. He also served as executive producer, along with Gary David Goldberg, Bill Lawrence, David Rosenthal, and producer/director Andy Cadiff.

Spin City reunited Fox with *Family Ties* creator/executive producer Gary David Goldberg. Together with Bill Lawrence, Goldberg created the series expressly for Fox, establishing it as a joint venture of DreamworksSKG, Goldberg's UBU Productions, and Lottery Hill Entertainment (run by Fox and partner Danelle Black). Goldberg served as co-executive producer with Fox for *Spin City*'s first and second seasons, and Lawrence stepped in during the third. For the fourth seasons, Rosenthal and Cadiff shared duties with Fox.

In other television work, Fox starred in Woody Allen's *Don't Drink the Water* in 1994. He directed Teri Garr and Bruno Kirby in an episode of *Tales From the Crypt* and later directed an installment of the series *Brooklyn Bridge*.

Fox also had time during his busy TV work to become an international film star, appearing in over a dozen features showcasing his keen ability to shift between comedy and drama. These include the *Back to the Future* trilogy, *The Hard Way*, *Doc Hollywood*, *The Secret of My Success*, *Bright Lights*, *Big City*, *Light of Day*, *Teen Wolf*, *Casualties of War*, *Life With Mikey*, *For Love or Money*, *The American President*, *Greedy*, *The Frighteners*, and *Mars Attacks!*

Fox married his Family Ties co-star, actress Tracy Pollan, in 1988. Together they have four children. Inspired to find projects that his kids would enjoy, Fox has lent his voice to a variety of hit children's films since the early 1990s. He began as Chance the dog in Disney's Homeward Bound movies. In December 1999, he provided the voice of Stuart Little for the Sony feature of the same name, and in the summer of 2001 Fox's voice was heard as that of the lead in Atlantis The Lost Empire, his first animated feature for The Walt Disney Co.

Though he would not share the news with the public for another seven years, Fox was diagnosed with young-onset Parkinson's disease in 1991. Upon disclosing his condition in 1998, he committed himself to the campaign for increased Parkinson's research.

Fox announced his retirement from Spin City in January 2000, effective upon the completion of his fourth season and 100th episode. Expressing pride in the show, its talented cast, writers, and creative team, he explained that new priorities made this the right time to step away from the demands of a weekly series.

Fox remains in demand as an actor. In spring 2009 he took on a multi-episode guest arc in Denis Leary's hit FX Network drama "Rescue Me." In 2006 he had a recurring guest role in the ABC legal drama "Boston Legal," and he appeared as Dr. Kevin Casey in the then-NBC series "Scrubs" in 2004. Fox also has become known as a bestselling author. His second book, *Always Looking Up: The Adventures of an Incurable Optimist*, was published in March 2009 and debuted at number two on the *New York Times* bestseller list. His 2002 memoir, *Lucky Man*, also was a *New York Times* and national bestseller, and its audio recording was nominated for a Grammy award. While he maintains a strong commitment to his acting and writing careers, Fox has shifted his primary focus and energies toward The Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research, which he launched in 2000, and its efforts to raise much-needed research funding and awareness for Parkinson's disease.

Fox wholeheartedly believes that if there is a concentrated effort from the Parkinson's community, elected representatives in Washington, DC, and (most importantly) the general public, researchers can pinpoint the cause of Parkinson's and uncover a cure within our lifetime.