



Optimism (Michael J. Fox) Backstory

Michael J. Fox is an endearing character we have come to know through film and TV roles over the past three decades. He is charming, funny, ever-youthful and always surprising.

Michael Andrew Fox was born in Canada on June 9, 1961. As a child, his interests included hockey, creative writing, art and music. Fox's acting talents began to emerge in his teens, and at eighteen he moved to Los Angeles. As he registered with the Screen Actors Guild he realized that another actor had registered under the same name. In homage to one of his favorite character actors of all time, Michael J. Pollard, Fox decided to adopt the letter "J" as his new middle initial.

Fox skyrocketed to fame in a career-making role—that of Alex P. Keaton on television's "Family Ties" (1982-1989). On this show Fox also met and married actress Tracy Pollan in 1988. The couple now has four children. From "Family Ties" Fox went on to star in several notable films, including the Back to the Future trilogy, The American President and Doc Hollywood.

As Fox's legions of fans know and love, he lives life — no matter the challenge or opportunity. In fact, his current real-life role may be the most inspiring part he has ever played. In 1998, Michael let the world know that he had Parkinson's disease. Showing the same commitment, drive and imagination we had come to love in his years on the large and small screens, he quickly emerged as a leading advocate and spokesperson to increase awareness of Parkinson's disease and funding for critically needed research toward a cure. The eponymous Foundation he established in 2000 is dedicated to finding a cure for Parkinson's disease by strategically prioritizing and aggressively funding Parkinson's research. And Fox has become known as an author, penning two best-selling memoirs of his life before and after Parkinson's.

With characteristic optimism, Fox describes his Parkinson's diagnosis in terms of what it has added to, not taken away from, his remarkable life. "I once said to somebody that in a way it was a gift...it really taught me acceptance," Fox said in a recent interview. "It taught me a lot about taking life on life's terms. And it opened up a way for me to be of service that I hadn't imagined before."

Michael is an inspiration to millions of people worldwide. His humor and unfailingly positive outlook are visible in everything he undertakes. And that gives us all hope — at a time when we need it most.

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