

Interview: Claudia Wells of 'Back to The Future,' at Mainframe Comic Con on April 25, 2020

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on April 22, 2020 - 9:13am

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CHICAGO – Three days to go before the two-day 'Mainframe Comic Con' – a completely free-to-join online comic book convention – will kick off, and on the first day (Saturday, April 25th) a rush of movie nostalgia will take place when actress Claudia Wells will be a guest representing the original "Back to the Future." Wells portrayed Marty McFly's girlfriend Jennifer Parker in that classic film.

The Mainframe Comic Con had the idea, during this stay-at-home timeframe, to put on an entire Comic Con – guests, artists, exhibitors and even cosplay – all online. Claudia Wells is just one of the many guests ([click here](#) [19] for the line-up) scheduled to virtually appear on this free-to-participate comic convention event. That's right, if you want to experience a Q&A with a cast member of "Back to the Future," you can find her at the Mainframe Comic Con.



Power of Love: On Set with Claudia Wells, Michael J. Fox and Christopher Lloyd

Photo credit: © Universal Pictures Home Entertainment

Many fans of the "Back to the Future" series consider Wells to be the ultimate Jennifer, even though a family matter prevented her from participating in the other sequels. She left acting to start her own retail outlet (Armani Wells), and has represented the original BTTF at many

appearances in the subsequent years. In 2011, she portrayed Jennifer again as a voiceover in "Back to the Future: The Game."

In anticipation of Well's appearance at the Mainframe Comic Con, HollywoodChicago.com republishes an interview conducted by Patrick McDonald in 2010. The Exclusive Photo is by photographer Joe Arce of Starstruck Foto for HollywoodChicago.com.

HollywoodChicago.com: How did you develop an interest in professional acting? And how did you get your first job?

Claudia Wells: I wanted to be an actress since I could remember, even when I was two years old. I used to cry to my mother as a toddler because I didn't think I was small enough to fit into the television [laughs]. I started performing children's roles at the opera in San Francisco when I was eight years old. From there, I did whatever modeling and acting I could, and then I convinced my mother to move to Los Angeles between grade school and high school so I could continue working towards become an actress.

HollywoodChicago.com: You did several guest spots on some memorable TV shows of the 1980s – 'Fame,' 'Trapper John,' 'Simon & Simon' come to mind – do you have any memories of any of these shows that stand out?

Wells: I was on 'Simon & Simon' during Gerald McRaney's directorial debut, portraying a girl who ended up getting involved in drugs and was a runaway, so it was very dramatic and fabulous. I did a TV movie called 'Babies Having Babies,' an ABC Afterschool Special, and it was Martin Sheen's directorial debut, which was an extraordinary experience. I was working all the time and with great people, and that was a blessing.

HollywoodChicago.com: What were your circumstances in landing the part of Jennifer in 'Back to the Future'?

Wells: I was contracted to a sitcom with Ed Asner called 'Off the Rack,' but it looked like ABC-TV wasn't going to pick it up for the fall. At the same time, I auditioned and got the part in 'Back to the Future.' ABC changed their mind and did pick up 'Off the Rack' for six episodes. Even though I had Ed Asner behind me to do both, ABC wouldn't let me out of the commitment. So I had to then decline Back to the Future, and they cast it with another actress [Melora Halin].

The film shot for eight weeks with Eric Stolz, while I did the six episodes for the sitcom. When 'Back to the Future' replaced the Marty McFly character with Michael J. Fox, the girl they had cast after me was five-foot-seven, too tall to play Marty's girlfriend. So I got my part back [laughs]. It was meant to be.



THE Jennifer Parker: Claudia Wells in Chicago, Circa 2010

Photo credit: Joe Arce of Starstruck Foto for HollywoodChicago.com, Hair and Makeup by Angela Brasington.

HollywoodChicago.com: Did you and rest of the cast going into production feel like they had a hit based just on the script?

Wells: I don't think that way, and I don't think anyone else did either. It was an amazing script and I loved it, and I did feel blessed to be working with Michael, Stephen Spielberg [the producer] and the other great people. But whenever I did something, I never thought past the actual work on it.

HollywoodChicago.com: Describe the working atmosphere of director Robert Zemeckis ... it's known to have been a pretty exhausting shoot. How did he keep everybody focused?

Wells: Everyone worked well together, so it was a team effort. I had gotten used to television, where we did ten pages a day, so for me it was

pretty relaxed compared to what I knew at the time.

HollywoodChicago.com: Okay, so after the film became a major hit, did you get more options as an actress and did you know what to do with those options?

Wells: I had no idea. I hear now 'oh I was so in love with you,' but at the time I had no idea. Even after the movie came out I didn't have a clue. To think of myself as important or 'famous,' my brain didn't and doesn't work that way.

HollywoodChicago.com: Had you signed on the do the sequels?

Wells: I was meant to do the second and third sequels. My Mom was going through cancer, and was very ill, and there was too much turmoil at home. I backed out of the entertainment business completely at the time. That's why I wasn't in the sequels.

HollywoodChicago.com: Do you often hear from people comparing the two Jennifers? When a person supports you, what do they mention the most?

Wells: They always say, 'you're my favorite Jennifer Parker, you're the only Jennifer Parker.' [laughs] In the early days of the internet, someone finally told me to Google myself, and so I did it. There were all these websites around the world talking about my portrayal of Jennifer.

On these sites, and other places on the web, there were all these rumors about where I was, but I was such a techno-idiot at the time I couldn't get on and say, 'hey, I'm still here.' [laughs] Now I've done enough interviews so it doesn't come up as much.

HollywoodChicago.com: In a classic film, no matter what your age, you can live forever. What do you think is legacy of the first 'Back to the Future,' and what makes you most proud to have been part of such a classic?

Wells: The legacy is that it's still beloved, and is discovered by new generations. I get little kids and all other age ranges coming up to me because they recognize me from the film. It's like people connecting to 'It's a Wonderful Life.' They remember the joy, love and family when they first connected to it, and that doesn't change. And just the dream of being able to switch back and forth in time, who doesn't want to do that?



Claudia Wells Appears on the Mainframe Comic Con on April 25th

Photo credit: MainframeComicCon.com

HollywoodChicago.com: What were the circumstances when you left acting? What did you pursue after all the smoke had cleared?

Wells: At age 23, I opened a men's fashion store called Armani Wells, with the intention of having a fabulous place for men to shop resale, especially designer labels. I shopped a lot of resale when I had to dress for industry parties, and I wanted men to have the same option. I also wanted a financial base, with the goal to go back into acting. But the store became a success and it was so much fun I never really got a

chance to go back to acting, even as now I still want to act.

HollywoodChicago.com: Also around that time, didn't you meet and date a young George Clooney?

Wells: He was doing 'Facts of Life,' and my friend Mindy Cohen introduced us on the set. And even at the time, he had an amazing work ethic. I'd never met such a hard working actor prior to meeting George.

HollywoodChicago.com: How long was your relationship?

Wells: Okay, that's all! [laughs]

HollywoodChicago.com: Finally, if you could go back in that DeLorean Time Machine to that young girl that was in the film, what would you tell her and why?

Wells: I would tell her not to put so much pressure on herself. And I would tell her that she's a good person because God loves her ... and not because she's starring in a major film.

Claudia Wells will appear on the Mainframe Comic Con at 4pm CST (5pm EST/2pm PST) on April 25th. The entire event takes place April 25th and 26th, 2020. For all the details and to participate, click MainframeComicCon.com [20].



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