

*Michael Jordan.* People in every country know that name. They know his face. They know his number: 23. He is tall and strong. He has a lot of money. He is very famous. And he can fly!

Michael Jordan is a basketball player. He played for thirteen years for the Chicago Bulls.\* Many people understand basketball. A lot of people love basketball. But Michael Jordan *lives* basketball. Every game is important to him. But where did he come from? How did he win six NBA† championships? When did he start to fly?

### Early Days

Michael's story starts on February 17, 1963, in Brooklyn, New York. The family moves to Wilmington, North Carolina later in 1963. Michael is the son of Deloris and James Jordan. He comes from a happy home with a lot of love. One old friend says, "The Jordans' door was always open. Mr. and Mrs. Jordan talked to us and listened to us. There was always a basketball game in the back yard."

Young Michael's best friend is his brother, Larry. Larry teaches his little brother a lot of things about basketball. Mr. Jordan builds a big basketball court for

\* Chicago Bulls, Houston Rockets, Portland Trailblazers, Los Angeles Lakers, Washington Wizards: NBA basketball teams.

† NBA: the best basketball teams in the US play for the NBA.

his sons and their friends. This is Michael's first basketball school.

Today, Michael says, "We played basketball games every day. On Saturdays, we were on our court all day. Rain? No problem. We played basketball."

For a long time, Larry is the best basketball player in the Jordan family. Baseball is Michael's game. He is strong and quick. He always wants to win.

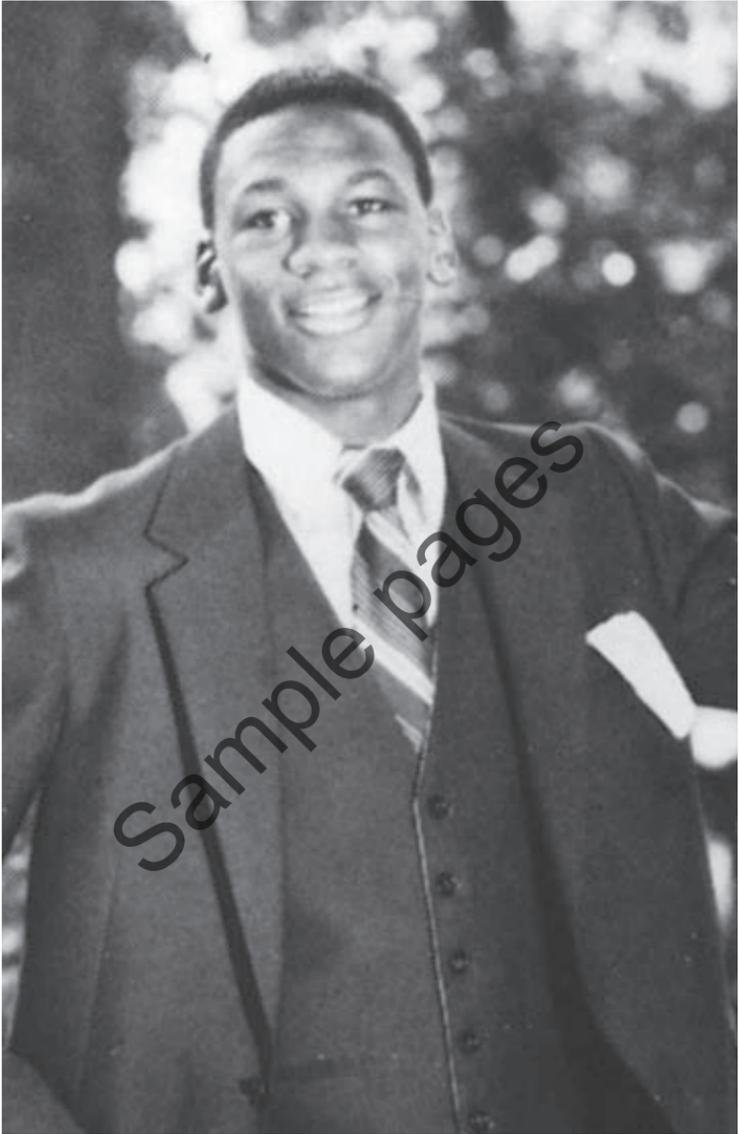
The Jordan children have jobs at home, but Michael doesn't like working. His brothers and sisters have money for things. Michael doesn't have any money because he doesn't work. The only jobs in his life are baseball and basketball.

### **Basketball at School**

From twelve to fifteen years old Michael plays baseball, basketball, and football at school. He is short for a basketball player: he is only 1.75 meters (5'9"). Mr. and Mrs. Jordan are under 1.75 meters. Michael isn't going to be very tall.

In 1978, Michael starts his three years at Laney High School. His teachers say now, "Michael was a good student. He was quiet, but he had a lot of friends."

Michael starts basketball at Laney on the "A" team. Larry is on the "A" team, too. He has number 45. Michael asks for number 23 because  $45 \div 2 = 22\frac{1}{2}$ . But Michael doesn't stay on the "A" team. The coach moves him to the "B" team.



*“Michael was a good student.”*

Michael is angry. He wants to be on the best team. He plays basketball every morning, afternoon, and evening. Sometimes, he doesn't go to school. His father talks to him. Basketball is important, but school is important, too. Michael goes back to school.

It is the summer of 1979. Mr. Jordan remembers, "Michael wanted to be tall. He wanted to be on the 'A' team. Suddenly he was 1.91 meters (6'3") tall." In September, Michael plays on the "A" team. He is the star of basketball at Laney.

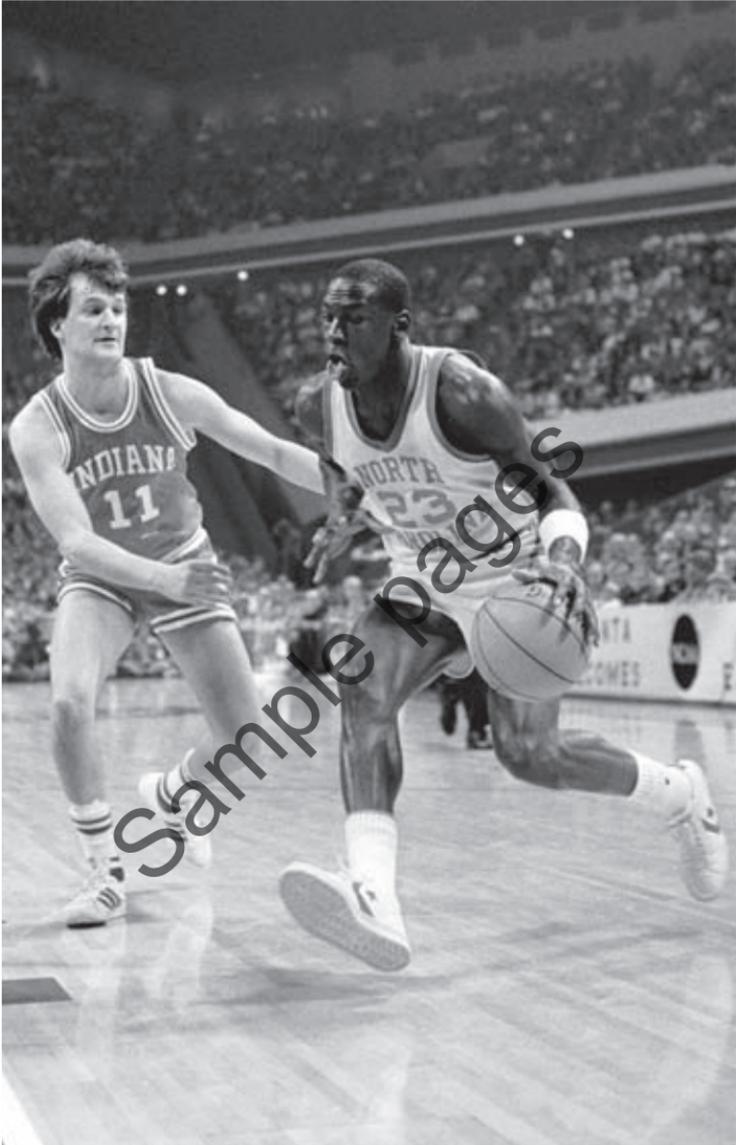
The "A" team games start at seven-thirty in the evening. Before five o'clock, the people of Wilmington are waiting at the court. They want to see Michael. Laney wins its first championship that year.

### College Life

Now Michael thinks about basketball after Laney. A lot of colleges want him. Michael likes the University of North Carolina (UNC) in Chapel Hill. He likes the basketball coach, Dean Smith. Michael goes to UNC in September, 1981, with his sister Roslyn. She is a very good student, and she starts college early.

Dean Smith teaches Michael a lot of things about basketball. "Remember, every player on the team is important," he says. Michael works on his game. He is on the first team in his first year at UNC.

Michael is the best new player in college basketball in 1981-2. The UNC team, the Tar Heels, get to the 1982 college basketball championships. They are going to play the Georgetown Hoyas.



*Michael is the best new player in college basketball.*