

Especially for young readers



# The Mini Page

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Distinguished Achievement Awards Winner 1975

By BETTY DEBNAM

Half-pint, half adult

## Gary Is Big in Laugh Stuff



Gary Coleman stars as 8-year-old Arnold Jackson. In the show, he and his brother are adopted by a wealthy widower. Although Gary is 11, he is the size of a 5-year-old. He had a kidney transplant when he was younger.

"I just might be in this laugh stuff for years," Gary Coleman told The Mini Page.

An 11-year-old who acts and talks much older and looks much younger than he is, Gary is a smash hit as Arnold Jackson on NBC's TV show "Diff'rent Strokes."

"They didn't plan for me to steal the show," says Gary.

But steal it he does.

"Gary is one of the hottest little properties in TV," an expert told us.

"I got my start when I was 5, modeling clothes at a local department store. The manager discovered me. He helped us sign with an agent," he says.

Modeling led to TV commercials and later the show.

We got his autograph for you!

*Gary Coleman*

### Family

Gary is an only child. The family lives in Zion, Illinois, near Chicago.

His father works in a medical lab as an inspector.

"My mother was a nurse, but she had to drop it for a while since I needed a guardian," says Gary.

He and his mom live in an apartment in Hollywood when they are filming.

"It's hard to treat him like a child," says his mom.

### Schooling

Gary has three hours of school a day. He is taught by a tutor. Sometimes he is able to "bank" hours or be with the tutor longer so he doesn't have school every day.

Gary is a good reader. He has always read above the reading level for his age.

His mother does not help him with his lines.

"He has a system of his own. I don't know how he does it," she added.

### Hobbies

"The money doesn't matter," says Gary.

But it has helped him pay for one hobby: collecting model electric trains.

He is also interested in space, aircraft and reading.

He likes to write and illustrate his stories.

His best friend is a 112-pound German shepherd named Champion.

He is also very close to the other stars of the show, Conrad Bain and Todd Bridgers.