

## A Timeless Classic

By Reg P. Wydeven  
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'Back to the Future' was on cable the other night. Our family saw it in the summer of 1985 in Eau Claire during a college visit for my sister and her best friend. I loved Michael J. Fox as Marty McFly and Christopher Lloyd as Doc Brown. It's hard to believe this year marks the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the film. And 2015 is another milestone, as it is the destination of Marty in 'Back to the Future II.'

Like every time-traveling movie, the sequel gave us a glimpse into a futuristic world. Unlike every time-traveling movie, 'Back to the Future' got a lot of predictions right. The movie featured thumbprint IDs, video drones, flat-screen TVs, video conferencing, voice-activated technology and even something resembling Google Glasses.

While self-lacing shoes and hover boards aren't quite here yet, they are reportedly coming soon. Automated dog walkers and flying cars are some of the only things that haven't come to fruition yet. Oh, and time-traveling DeLoreans.

The iconic car was built by automaker John DeLorean. He started his career at General Motors, where he created America's first "muscle" car, the Pontiac GTO, in the mid-1960s. In the early 1970s he left GM to launch his own company. Here he manufactured the DMC 12, the sleek, angular, stainless steel colored car with gull-wing doors. By the time DeLorean's company went bankrupt in the early 1980s, they had only made about 9,000 DMC 12s. Producers of 'Back to the Future' chose the car as their time machine because it looked like a UFO from 1950s sci-fi movies.

And the car is now the center of a legal battle. John DeLorean's widow, Sally, filed a federal lawsuit against the Texas-based DeLorean Motor Company. She claims the company has been illegally using the DeLorean name to sell merchandise featuring her husband's name, such as hats, pens, notebooks, key chains and other similar items. She further alleges the business has illegally granted other companies, including Nike, Mattel, Apple and Urban Outfitters, the license to use the DeLorean name and image.

Sally also accuses the company of planning to manufacture an electric version of the DMC 12, illegally using designs that belong to her husband's estate. The lawsuit seeks an injunction barring the company from further using the trademarks, in addition to monetary damages and any profits derived from their use of the trademarks.

According to Sally's attorney, R. Scott Thompson, John DeLorean bought his company's trademarks, images and other intellectual property during the company's bankruptcy proceeding.

The DeLorean Motor Company never had any affiliation with John's original organization. Its attorney, William Mead, says the company existed for 10 years prior to John DeLorean's death in 2005 and has registered trademarks. The company assembles and sells DeLoreans made from original factory parts it acquired in the original bankruptcy proceeding. Mead asserts John DeLorean was aware of his client's operations and didn't oppose them, therefore, Sally is not entitled to any damages.

Without a flux capacitor, it's impossible to predict the outcome of this case. As for knowing the future, I just pray 'Back to the Future II' was way off when it showed the Cubs winning the World Series this year.

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