



WILL & MICHAEL
OUR STORY



INTROS

Hi, we're Will (on the right) and Michael (on the left)! The Pacific Northwest and the Seattle area is where we call home!

Thank you for wanting to learn a little more about us! We hope that this book lets you see our story so far.



I know you'd never believe it from this photo, but this was my first time around baby goats

WILL

I grew up in Eastern Washington, in a small town just north of Spokane in a family of five. I have two sisters - my older sister lives in Eastern Washington with her husband - they have three sons and a daughter. My younger sister lives in Central Washington with her husband, daughter and two sons. Growing up, we lived on the river, so spending time outside was something that has always been a part of my life. Our family loved to go snow skiing at the resorts nearby and visiting our extended family, who are scattered across Washington and California.

Living in a small town where I knew I was different was never easy. My family raised me with values that I still hold important to this day. Growing up Latino, family has always a core value for me. Being gay, this has also allowed me to expand my idea of family, to a much broader view where I have my immediate family and the family I have found over the last couple decades. This includes many people, but particularly my two best friends that I have know for about 20 years.

I went to college at Gonzaga University and majored in Criminal Justice. I loved the show CSI and had a dream of becoming a criminal psychologist. It didn't take long after college to realize that wasn't really my dream any longer. Today, I help "make magic" at Disney and hire technologists. In 2018, I went back and received my Master's degree in Human Resource Management, graduating in 2020.

After graduating from Gonzaga, I wanted to explore the world and try living in new areas of the U.S., which ultimately led me to move to California, North Carolina and eventually Atlanta, Georgia, where I met one very special person (spoiler alert: it was Michael - we'll get to that story a little later).

I'm a big believer in filling my time with things that bring me joy. The things that bring me joy are writing, going on weekend hikes, kayaking in the Puget Sound, traveling, anything Disney-related, trying new foods, and singing (which is usually only done in the comfort of my own home, because it isn't pretty).

My favorite movies are The Goonies, Coco and The Little Mermaid. I also love to cook and make delicious empanadas, chilaquiles and whenever my sweet tooth is acting up, I love to make cinnamon rolls.



me & my best friends
(above)



me & each of my sisters
(left & right)



FUN FACTS ABOUT WILL



Likes: Disney, Taylor Swift (my favorite album is 1989), Sour Patch Kids, Avatar: The Last Airbender (hence my Halloween costume this year), Legos, going to Broadway plays, and drinking coffee

Dislikes: Quiche...end of list

-My favorite holiday is Halloween, but Christmas is a close second

-I have always dreamed of being an author and during the pandemic, I made that dream a reality. I wrote and published my first novel and hope to publish my second one in the next couple years!



-I love hamburgers. If I'm ever near a city where there is an In-N-Out Burger, you can find me there. Lil' Woodys (in Seattle) is a very close second.

-While both my sisters were very gifted athletes, the sports gene apparently skipped me. My younger sister was a competitive gymnast, and I also enrolled in gymnastics. Surprisingly, I wasn't too bad (but I still would not consider myself an athlete). I do, however, love going to Seattle Mariners baseball games!





Michael with his childhood hero, Mr. Toad at Disneyland in 2023.

MICHAEL

I grew up in a suburb just outside of Atlanta, Georgia and am the youngest of a family of five. I have an older sister who is an artist and lives in Louisiana with her husband. My older brother, his wife and two kids still live in Georgia - not too far away from where we all grew up and near my parents. We love going back to visit them all!

I was lucky to live close to and go to school with cousins that were close in age, so family was always very important. We spent most weekends on the lake with my grandfather and took summer trips to the beach with extended family - I developed a love of the water from an early age.

In high school, I was very attracted to the arts. I spent a lot of time in art classes, whether I was working on sketching, painting or mixed media. I was also very involved in theater and had lead roles in a number of musicals (that my parents would be happy to show you videos of).

I attended Georgia Tech for my undergraduate degree and stayed in Atlanta after graduation to be close to family and friends. This was when I met Will, and we decided to start our own adventure on the west coast.

Since moving to the Seattle area in 2015, I've built upon my strong work skills and currently serve as a manager for a law firm. I love living in an area that has such great access to nature, whether its the water, the mountains, or the forest. A lot of my family still lives in the southeast, so we get to take frequent trips back to see everyone.



me & my family
(left)

me & my best friend
(right)



FUN FACTS ABOUT MICHAEL



Favorite movies: Jurassic Park, The Mummy, Spirited Away, Howl's Moving Castle, anything Marvel

I love singing (blame the musical theater) - whether its in the car, in the kitchen, or working up the courage to sing at karaoke.

I love to cook (and eat), but im much better at preparing meals than I am at baking. (I blame lactose intolerance and trying to substitute ingredients in baking recipes).

My dad's side of the family is Greek, so we grew up making Greek food (especially around holidays) that I attempt to replicate from the family cookbook.



I'm an avid gamer, whether its video games or board games. I'll jump at the chance of anyone that wants to play Mario Kart with me (because Will is sick of me winning), but I also enjoy playing games on my own.

I really like making art and being creative. I'll spend half a day on art project on the weekends, most recently working on sewing projects after buying myself a sewing machine in 2020. I also still get drawn into a good coloring book.

Reading is one of my favorite hobbies. I lean towards science fiction and fantasy and can definitely get absorbed into a good (if long) series of books.



OUR STORY(SO FAR)

We met in 2013 in Atlanta, Georgia. Michael sent the first message on OkCupid (does that still exist?) and after sharing our mutual love for the movie Hocus Pocus, the two of us met at Starbucks. Will was a bit hesitant at first, thinking that Michael was too cute to be real and was fully expecting to be catfished. Luckily, he wasn't and ironically, we had our first date at the same Starbucks that Will had been working at part-time. This made for some comical teasing from his co-workers, who were watching this love story just begin to unfold. Will told his roommate immediately after the date, "I met the man I want to marry". Needless to say, Michael made a good first impression.

The two of us knew early on, we had found our "person" and were engaged in 2014, and married each other in 2015. Over the last ten years, we moved cross-country to Palm Desert, California and then finally settled down in the Seattle area. We both love to travel, are both HUGE Disney fans, love going to the beach, and cooking together at home.

One of the earlier things that we both bonded on was the importance of family. We both came from families of five and shared the same desire to build a family of our own. In 2017, we started to seriously look into this and the different avenues for how we could start our family.



OUR STORY(SO FAR)

In 2018, we received a call to see if we could care for two brothers. We were told it would only be for a few weeks but could help us "learn" on our journey to parenthood. Those few weeks ended up turning into four years with these amazing boys. During this time, we also had the opportunity to meet the boys' mother and sisters, who they eventually moved back in with.

Today, the entire family has become an extension of our family. We see the boys frequently and spend holidays and birthdays with their mom and sisters - we feel blessed to have them all in our lives.



WHERE WE LIVE



Our home sweet home

OUR NEIGHBORHOOD



We feel incredibly fortunate to live in an area that's a great place for kids to grow up in, but it's also a great place for a family to go exploring and have weekend adventures. We moved to our home in 2018 and in that time, have become friends with our neighbors and have built a really great sense of community.

Our home is less than ten minutes away from the Puget Sound waterfront, and minutes away from great hiking trails. It is probably one of the reasons that anything related to the outdoors has really encompassed a lot of our past times. We are also grateful to have friends and family nearby as well.



OUR TRADITIONS

Nothing makes us happier than when we can spend time in the kitchen together. Our family loves to watch the TV show "Kids Baking Championship" so we always try to get everyone involved.



They might not have won a World Series, but we love the Mariners and going to baseball games. There's nothing more fun than enjoying a game during a sunny day in Seattle (since those can sometimes be few and far between).



We love Fall and Winter in our home because they include Halloween and Christmas! We love to pick out pumpkins from a local farm and carve them to put out on our porch. We ALWAYS dress up for Halloween. Our Christmas tree goes up on November 1, and it's filled with ornaments that are special to us (especially if they were made by the boys).



We love to celebrate birthdays around here! Every year, the birthday VIP gets to pick their "theme" and then we get to work on getting a party set up that they will enjoy. Below are some of our favorite memories of celebrating together.





OUR VALUES

We like to lead our lives through kindness and joy. There are many challenging things going on in the world on any given day - we want to be sure that our actions are helping to make the lives around us better. We're not perfect and sometimes this is hard for us as well, but it is the goal that we strive for every day.

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As the saying goes, "If you don't have something nice to say, don't say anything at all". Respect of other people's beliefs, cultures, religions, personal and gender identities is a non-negotiable for us, and we like to surround ourselves with people who feel the same way.

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Standing up for others or speaking up when others cannot is another important value for us. Growing up gay, we were both victims of bullying and discrimination. Fortunately, there were those who came to stand up for us when we didn't have the courage to do so ourselves. We try to do the same now whenever we can and want our children to know that it's important for them to do the same.

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Will is a first generation college graduate which is something he takes great pride in. We both feel that education is an incredibly crucial value in our home. We both consider ourselves lifelong learners and try to create spaces within our home that allow for reflection and focus.

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Be happy. Be goofy. Have fun. Life is too short not to laugh and enjoy every moment.

DREAMS FOR OUR CHILD



First and foremost, we want our child to know how much they are loved and that they feel safe. The world can be a hard place sometimes, so knowing that our home is a safe space for them to be themselves will be very important to us. We hope that our child will feel the freedom to explore their passions and interests with the support of their dads and have a zeal for life that also brings happiness to those around them. We can't wait to also support them as their "biggest fans" in whatever interests they choose to pursue.

We hope that they get to live a long and healthy life and can look back at their own life when they are old and that the memories bring nothing but smiles to their face.

WHY OPEN ADOPTION & OUR GOALS

Our dream is that our child will have a complete understanding of their adoption story and have a relationship with their birth family that helps propel them into adulthood with no "missing pieces" or unanswered questions.

We have a genuine hope that we will also be able to have a meaningful relationship with our child's birth family; a relationship rooted in trust of each other, respect and love. We are excited to welcome them into our family and for this relationship to continue and grow in the years to come.



"A home isn't always the house we live in. It's also the people we choose to surround ourselves with." - T.J. Klune