

# Q&A: Gary Scheiner

Executive Creative Director, CDMP, Pennsylvania USA



In his long career, Gary has built no fewer than three health and wellness divisions for agency networks and is thus supremely well-qualified to help judge the new Healthcare category at the 2022 Caples Awards.

He talks about his amazing work for the Michael J. Fox Foundation below. And that he has a long association with The Caples Awards. What he doesn't mention is that he once got to record a Beatles song for a campaign – in the Abbey Road studios. Using the same Hammond organ Paul McCartney played.

C'mon, advertising has its moments, doesn't it?

## **Q: These are strange and unusual times. How has the pandemic been for you personally?**

Whatever do you mean by strange? Has something happened that I'm not aware of? All I know is, I get to sleep later, exercise more, commute less, eat dinner with my family every night, and have more substantive conversations with my children. If that's strange, then call me bizarre!

## **Q: Do you have a side-hustle? What do you do outside your job as a counterbalance to the stresses and strains of your job?**

I'm a runner and biker, so COVID has given me a lot more time to get out on the road, listen to music, and explore my surroundings. I've also become a listener of podcasts. My youngest daughter is studying to be a criminal psychologist, so I find myself enraptured by all these true crime podcasts. I don't know if listening to stories about the worst of humanity necessarily reduces my stress, but it makes me more relevant to my daughter and a hell of a lot more interesting at cocktail parties.

## **Q: In your career, which one piece of work are you most proud of?**

Do my children count? Because I'm pretty damn proud of them. If we're talking work, work, then of everything I've done over the last 30 years, I keep going back to what I did for the Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research, not because it's the best creative I've been a part of – because it's not – but because of the impact I had on the work and the impact the work had in the world. I worked hand-in-hand with Michael and his team to launch his foundation, drive awareness, raise tens-of-millions-of-dollars for clinical research, and make a meaningful difference in the lives of people living with, caring for, and treating Parkinson's Disease. It still gives me great pride, all these years later.

**Q: If you weren't in advertising, what would you be doing now?**

I honestly think I would still be in advertising/marketing, only I would be working for a charity or cause-related organization. That's the stuff that gets my juices flowing more than anything (see Michael J. Fox answer above). Unfortunately, they don't generally pay well, so until I'm at a point in my life where money doesn't matter, advertising it is!

**Q: Are awards important?**

In my 20s and 30s, awards were all I thought about. I was obsessed with who was winning, how, why, and what did I need to do to join them on the podium. Now that I'm considerably older and perhaps a little more jaded, I find I'm not as obsessed. I'm sure winning more than my fair share of local, regional, national, and global awards has something to do with it. (True story: I moved during the pandemic and made the tough decision to discard literally hundreds of award show trophies. I did keep a few of the special ones.) But I still believe in the value and preach the importance of awards to my teams and clients. It's good to know where we stand against our peers and competitors. And great work from anywhere inspires me to push for better.

**Q: What does it mean to be a juror of The Caples Awards 2022?**

I'm honestly incredibly excited to be back on the Caples jury. I ran the Caples Awards for 10 years (2004-2014) and worked hard to find the best, most talented creative leaders from all over the world to sit on the jury. It's humbling to be joining this distinguished group. What's always fuelled my passion for the show is its unwavering commitment to honouring work that works and the fact that judging has always been entirely voluntary – judges paid their own way. Only passion and commitment could make that happen year after year.

**Q: What sort of work are you hoping to see?**

I personally love a simple idea beautifully executed. I don't need to see big budgets or fancy productions. I'm more excited by a brilliant insight that manifests in something smart and memorable.

**Q: What is your one all-time favourite piece of advertising, the one idea you both admire and envy and wish that you'd done yourself?**

That's an impossible question to answer. There are too many to count and for different reasons. **Meet Graham** for its innovation. **The Immunity Charm** for its beautiful, analog simplicity. **Decode Jay-Z** for its deep customer engagement. **Dove Real Beauty** and **#LikeAGirl** for their authenticity. There are so many more, but what they all have in common is they are built on a real insight.