

an outbreak of Ebola that began in western Africa in 2013. He became director-general of the China CDC in 2017, and by early 2020 was tasked with managing China's response to the emerging COVID-19 pandemic. During that early period, his work focused on attempts to determine the origin of the SARS-CoV-2 virus and its means of transmission as well as efforts to contain and monitor its spread. Although Gao and other Chinese health authorities later faced some international criticism over their handling of the early pandemic, including allegations that they did not investigate the possibility of human-to-human transmission quickly enough, Gao continued to emphasize the importance of working together to combat the pandemic and develop means of preventing and treating COVID-19. "The virus is our common enemy," he told Jon Cohen in an interview for *Science* (27 Mar. 2020), "not the enemy of any person or country."



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EARLY LIFE AND EDUCATION

Known in China as Gao Fu and in English-speaking countries as George Fu Gao, Gao was born in Shanxi Province, China, on November 15, 1961. After completing his secondary education, he enrolled in Shanxi Agricultural University, where he studied to become a veterinarian. That field of study was not his choice, however, as it had been selected for him through China's bureaucratic education system. He earned his bachelor's degree from the university in 1983 and went on to pursue graduate studies at Beijing Agricultural University. During that period, Gao developed an interest in virology and shifted his academic focus toward that field. "This changed my whole life," he recalled to Geoff Watts for the *Lancet* (28 July 2018). "I transformed myself from a vet into an infectious disease researcher." He completed a master's degree in 1986 and began teaching virology. In 1988, he received the Young Scientist Award from the China Association for Science and Technology. Pursuing formal studies in his desired field, Gao left China for the United Kingdom, where he enrolled in a doctoral program at the University of Oxford in 1991. He earned a doctorate in molecular virology in 1994.

EARLY CAREER AS A LAWYER

After finishing law school Jackson clerked for a number of important judges, including Judge Patti B. Saris of the US District Court for the District of Massachusetts, Bruce M. Selya of the United States Court of Appeals for the First Circuit in Rhode Island, and Supreme Court Justice Stephen Breyer. In 2000, she entered private practice as an associate with the law firm Goodwin Proctor in Boston, Massachusetts. In 2002, she moved to the Feinberg Group in Washington, DC.

From 2003 to 2005 Jackson worked as an assistant special counsel to the US Sentencing Commission, an agency that oversees sentencing by federal courts. Her time there piqued her interest in public defense. Wanting to learn more about how the criminal justice system actually worked, she spent two years as an assistant federal public defender, handling cases before the US Court of Appeals for the DC Circuit. Although her role consisted mostly of researching and writing, she also won a number of victories against government prosecutors that either shortened or erased defendants' prison sentences. During this time, she also worked on the cases of several Guantanamo Bay detainees who were being held without formal charges. In 2007, she returned to private practice with the DC-based firm Morrison and Foerster.

In 2009, Jackson was nominated by President Obama for vice chair of the US Sentencing Commission and was unanimously confirmed by the Senate. As a commissioner she focused on sentencing disparities, and in particular supported amendments to reduce sentences for nonviolent drug offenses. For example, during this time the commission made sentencing guidelines for crack cocaine offenses more lenient.

EARLY JUDICIAL CAREER AND SUPREME COURT NOMINATION

In 2012, President Obama nominated Jackson to the federal judiciary on the US District Court for the District of Columbia. She was confirmed early the following year by the Senate with bipartisan support. During her career as a US District Court judge Jackson developed a reputation for being extremely thorough and writing long opinions on contentious cases. In 2019, for example, she wrote a 118-page ruling denying President Donald Trump's counsel Donald McGahn immunity from testifying in Trump's impeachment trial. The opinion earned significant attention for her statement that "presidents are not kings."

Jackson's growing profile as an experienced and respected judge brought her consideration for even more prominent positions. In 2021, President Joe Biden nominated her for the DC Circuit Court of Appeals. Although her appointment was opposed by many Republicans, she received Senate approval in a 53–44 vote. On the appeals court she again drew attention for ruling against executive privilege claims by the Trump administration. Then, after less than a year in

Lincoln Peirce

Born: October 23, 1963

Occupation: Cartoonist

Middle-schooler Nate Wright, Lincoln Peirce's most celebrated cartoon character, has become a long-standing favorite among young readers since the *Big Nate* novels first appeared in 2010. With eye-catching covers showcasing Nate sporting jeans, a yellow T-shirt, and a blue towel fastened around his neck, posing as a cape, young readers realize, as they devour the novels, that the outfit is only a speck of Nate's adventurous, larger-than-life personality.

Though the character only reached a wider audience in the 2010s, *Big Nate* has been the protagonist of an ongoing cartoon strip whose first appearance in newspapers dates back to 1991. The idea of adapting the strip to a novel format did not come to Peirce until the 2000s when children's books that combined text and cartoons gained special attention from publishing houses. When the first of eight *Big Nate* novels, *Big Nate: In a Class by Himself*, was released, the beloved cape-wearing Nate, who until then had found only a moderate readership, earned a global following. "I think it's really an unlikely story that after the strip had been around for almost twenty years, it gained this second life," Peirce told Alex Dueben in an interview for *The Beat* (26 Oct. 2016).

While 2016 marked the end of the novels, the *Big Nate* animated series debuted on the streaming service Paramount Plus in 2022, giving fans of Peirce's work new adventures of Nate to look forward to. At the same time, he also began penning new children's stories.

EARLY LIFE AND EDUCATION

Born on October 23, 1963, in Ames, Iowa, Lincoln Peirce grew up in Durham, New Hampshire, where his family moved shortly after his birth. As a young boy, he was captivated by the animated *Popeye* cartoons featured in a local television show and learned to appreciate the ingenuity, surrealism, and absurdity fostered



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