

Fred Savage

Titles: 13 Sources: 2 Stills: 18

Born: Highland Park, Illinois; July 9th 1976
Elder brother of [Ben Savage](#) and [Kala Savage](#)



*A face of the Sixties – NOT. Fred's chief fame was as star of TV's "**The Wonder Years**", a fairly blatant exercise in re-writing the past to suit contemporary sensibilities. Funny in patches, though. Source: indeterminate*



With left, Josh Saviano, a Millhouse lookalike and Kevin's second-best buddy, and right, best buddy Winnie (Dancia McKellar). Right from episode no.1, Kevin was assigned a "love interest", and much (way *too* much) of the series was preoccupied with this anachronistic prepubescent romance, thus meshing "*The Wonder Years*" seamlessly with all those interminable US and Australian teen dating soaps. And natch, Winnie was a highly emancipated early sixties woman, so Kevin ultimately fails to score... Source: indeterminate website

The Virgin International Encyclopedia of Film entry:

"Juvenile lead apt at appearing wise beyond his years - a talent he put to good use in **"VICE VERSA"** (1988), the story of a father (Judge Reinhold) and son who switch bodies. Savage, whose younger siblings Kala [?] and Ben are also actors, is best known as the star of TV's popular **"The Wonder Years"**."

Biographical note from distributors' promotional flier for **"VICE VERSA"**:

"Fred Savage, now eleven years old, lives in Chicago with his parents and a younger brother and sister. He started doing commercials at the age of six, with no formal acting training. As Fred explains: "I got started in the 'biz' when

my mom took me down to an audition at the local community centre, because she thought it would be fun. The commercial was for Oscar Meyer. Well, I didn't get it, but six months later the same director called me for a Pizza Hut commercial. I didn't get that either. But six months later the director called again for a Pac-Man vitamin commercial and I got it! So people just started calling me and here I am!"

Fred has now appeared in 27 on-camera TV commercials and 36 voice-over radio spots, including a host of major national advertisers. At the age of 8, he landed his first starring role in a feature film, **"THE BOY WHO COULD FLY"**. That film was followed by an appearance in **"THE PRINCESS BRIDE"**, where he played the grandson who critically listens to his grandfather read a fairy tale, commenting frequently on what he thinks of the story. In **"VICE VERSA"**, he had his biggest challenge to

date: playing the dual role of a child and an

adult trapped in a child's body.



Fred's real big-screen break came with "VICE VERSA" (88), an Americanised update of the F. Anstey body-swap comedy first filmed in 1947. Unfortunately it was blown out of the water by Tom Hanks' "BIG", released the same year, and audiences had already begun to tire of the tune after "FREAKY FRIDAY", "18 AGAIN" and "LIKE FATHER, LIKE SON". Fred made other films, but his fame remained confined to the small screen.

Source: Distributors' promotional flier for "VICE VERSA"

To figure out how to perform the adult role, Fred took a lot of cues from Judge Reinhold. "A lot of times, to get the right emphasis on lines and stuff, I'd ask Judge if he could please say the line," Fred explains, "and then I'd copy his ups and downs, tone of voice and stuff like that." Fred also found he had to be a teacher, by instructing Reinhold on performing like an eleven-year old boy.

Fred Savage's television credits include "CONVICTED: A MOTHER'S STORY", "The Twilight Zone", "Morningstar / Eveningstar" and "Video Madness".

What the Critics said:

In "VICE VERSA":

"...Reinhold and Savage appear to be having a whale of a time in their roles."

– Leonard Maltin's Movie and Video Guide 2001

"...Reinhold clowns around like mad, but it's young Fred Savage from "The Wonder Years", stuck in school as a 35-year old, who gets the best stuff to do..."

– TV Times Film & Video Guide 1995

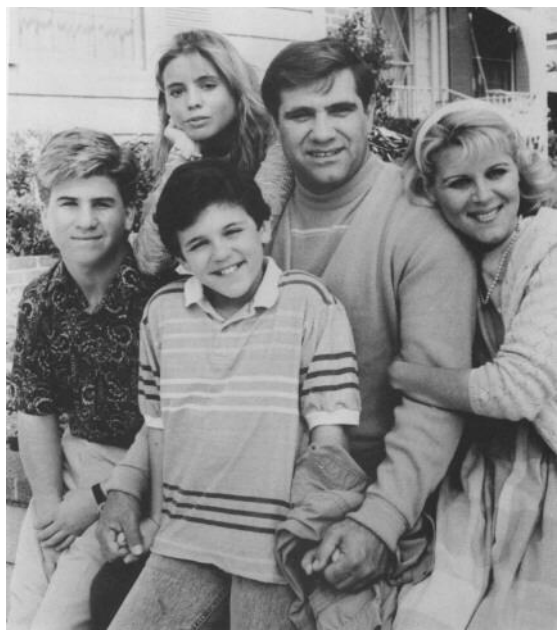
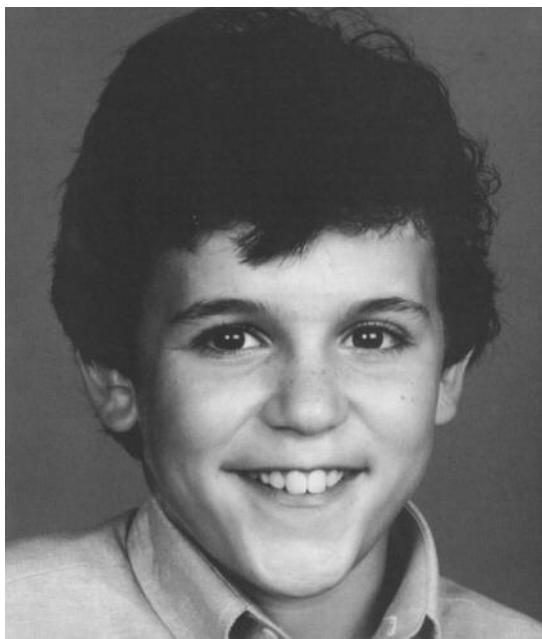
"Young Fred Savage nearly steals the show from Judge Reinhold in this surprisingly entertaining comedy about a father who changes bodies with his son. We've seen it all many times before in lesser films such as "FREAKY FRIDAY" and "LIKE FATHER, LIKE SON". However, the writing of Dick Clement and Ian De Frenais and the chemistry of the players make it seem almost fresh..."

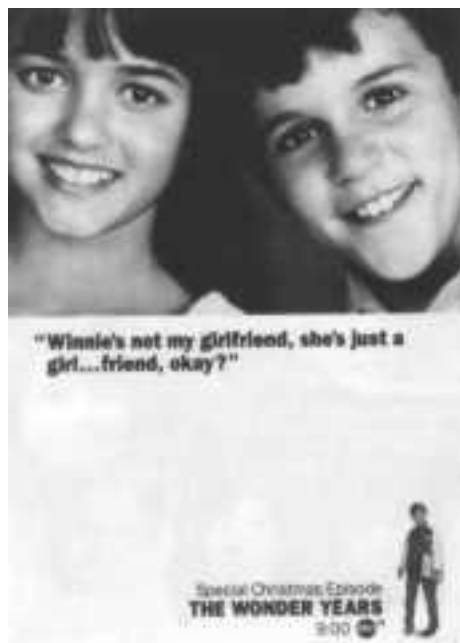
– Video Movie Guide 1993

"...There are only so many gags to be made about role reversals but, thanks to an amusing script by "Likely Lads" Dick Clement and Jon La Frenais and winning performances by the

two talented leads, this is by some distance the
best of the "BIG" also-rans." – **Sunday Times**

Fred Savage was kept too busy with TV's cod sixties nostalgia sitcom "**The Wonder Years**" to sign up for more than the occasional movie. He was the original choice to play "**RICHIE RICH**", but was passed over when Macaulay Culkin expressed an interest in the role. He starred in the forgettable comedy fantasy "**LITTLE MONSTERS**" (which was highly derivative of "**BEETLEJUICE**") and "**THE WIZARD**", a lacklustre video game road movie, with Luke Edwards his autistic younger brother. None of Fred's feature film appearances, I suspect, showed him to his best advantage. A pity, because he had a very personable manner – in the Corey Haim / Elijah Wood vein – and a deft comic touch. The intrusive 1980s social politics ruined "**The Wonder Years**" for me, but Fred Savage was the last person to be blamed for that. He was the kind of modest, level-headed pre-adolescent boy with whom adults could empathise comfortably. It's not known if he's related at all to Brad Savage ("**SALEM'S LOT**", "**ISLANDS IN THE STREAM**").





Another beef with *"The Wonder Years"* was its over-use of an adult narrative voice, interpreting Kevin's emotions and experiences firmly from the condescending standpoint of his later adult self. The adult is never a dependable witness on the emotional world of the pre-adolescent, and the device had the annoying tone of a parental commentary. Thus Kevin would agonise endlessly about dating Winnie, but never even speak of masturbation to his friends or bullying elder brother. His views toward his taciturn dad were filtered through the knowledge that the show's primary audience were themselves already parents. Kevin is never spanked – but more because 1980s parents disapproved than that early sixties ones might have done. And top left – the traditional schoolboy nightmare of finding yourself naked in the classroom has to be tempered down to the prudery of US television. *"The Wonder Years"* made so many compromises that any authentic period feeling was conspicuous by its absence.

Source: indeterminate website



So, after having an adult self perpetually commentating on his daily life, in "**VICE VERSA**" his body gets physically occupied by one. Such comedy devices only reinforce the conclusion that a young boy has no meaning whatever except as a foetal stage on the road to adulthood. Whatever happened to the maxim that it is better to travel hopefully than to arrive?

Source: Film Review 1989-90

FILMOGRAPHY

Year	Age	Title	Role
--		The Twilight Zone	US TV series
--		Morningstar / Eveningstar	US TV series ?
--		Video Madness	US TV series ?
86	10	THE BOY WHO COULD FLY	(NOT in title role)
87	11	CONVICTED: A MOTHER'S STORY	US TV
87		THE PRINCESS BRIDE	(erm... NOT in title role...)
88	12	VICE VERSA	in joint lead, as Charlie, 11
88		RUNAWAY RALPH	
		with Summer Phoenix	
89	13	LITTLE MONSTERS	in central role
		with brother Ben	
89		THE WIZARD	in lead role
		with Luke Edwards, Christian Slater	
--		The Wonder Years	US TV period sitcom, in central role, Kevin
		with Josh Saviano, Dancia McKellar	
90	14	WHEN YOU REMEMBER ME	US TV
91	15	CHRISTMAS ON DIVISION STREET	in central role