

Impact Statement

Audrey Zhang, Grade 8.

The Mending Lotus, 2023.

Digital art, 8 x 11.5 inches.

St. Mildred's Lightbourn School, Oakville, Ontario, Canada

Unsung Hero: Aiko Herzig-Yoshinaga

When all seems lost in a world of injustice, one young woman rose to the occasion...

Aiko Herzig-Yoshinaga is a lawyer. She's a steno typist, a clerical worker, a researcher, a social rights activist and most importantly, a hero. On August 5, 1924, in Sacramento, California, Aiko was born to two Japanese immigrant parents. After her personal experience at the cruel Japanese internment camps, she thought to fight for social justice. There are several traits that Aiko has displayed such as justice, courage, and perseverance. For the main focus of my art piece on this activist, I chose the virtue of justice. Aiko's personal experiences and losses at the camps shaped her goals for a world that is socially fair. Losing her baby and dad at the internment camps, she took an interest in right the wrong in history. She had much courage to go up against the government and searching for proof wasn't easy and for that I applaud her. She also had to persevere, taking on many jobs to support her family before she found the right one for her. In conclusion, I admire Aiko Herzig-Yoshinaga because she was a brave, perseverant, and fair role model.

I have expressed the fascinating life of Aiko Herzig-Yoshinaga through this artwork. I have drawn Aiko in her prime years. I have tried to include as many symbols as I could in this art piece. Near her jawline, you will see houses structured together by a fence. This represents the internment camps Aiko first-handedly experienced and how she felt trapped. Her throat is portrayed by a library, showing her dedication to finding proof for her case against the U.S. government, which translates to her voice. Furthermore, her shoulders show her "supporting" and "carrying" the Supreme Court, symbolizing her will for justice. You may also see that in her glasses, there is a broken bridge with a person on it, this represents how Aiko is trying to fix the gap between the Japanese and the Americans. The other side of the glasses show the justice scale, which connects back to the idea of her passion for justice. The background is made up of diplomas being thrown in the air as Aiko never actually had a chance to graduate because she was captured during her time at university, but after winning her case, she was given a second chance and got her diploma, so the background represents her glory! And the most important thing is the birds flying around Aiko, that is how I named this piece, The Mending Lotus. Birds represent freedom and they have a flower pattern embedded on their bodies, most specifically a lotus flower, which represents hope. Overall, doing this piece digitally has been such a fun experience and I look forward to doing future digital projects too!

My project, which highlights the significant work of Aiko Herzig-Yoshinaga, will be featured at our upcoming spring arts night on April 27, 2023. My work will also be published on the MySMLS website for viewers all around the world to see.