

Impact Statement

Emily Hu, Grade 8.

The Injustice and the Justice, 2022.

Digital art, 4.5 x 7.5 inches.

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

Unsung Hero: Mitsuye Endo

Mitsuye Endo, a name connected to justice and freedom for Japanese Americans. With all Japanese American fired in January 1942, Mitsuye Endo chose to stand up bravely and fight for their justice. Before the Attack on Pearl Harbor, Mitsuye worked as a clerk for the California Department of Motor Vehicles. She is the second of four children in her house. She was only 22 years old when she was fired. Mitsuye once said, "I agreed to do it at that moment, because they said it's for the good of everybody, and so I said, well if that's it, I'll go ahead and do it." Her courage of fighting for justice is what inspires me. She stood up for her community, challenging the injustices that happened to them, and bravely denied the offer to release herself in exchange for dropping her lawsuit.

Lots of virtues are demonstrated on Mitsuye Endo, such as courage, justice, and reliability. I selected courage because that is what made her to stand up for her community. This courage gave her the support to be the one that face and challenge the anti-Japanese sentiment directly, and free the Japanese Americans from the internment camp. Although she is only an ordinary woman in the United States, she decided to send a petition to the court for their justice. Without courage, she would not accept the offer from Purcell, a Japanese American Citizens League and ACLU lawyer, to be the one that stood up for her community.

I have reflected on different concepts of what Mitsuye Endo fought for in my artwork. As you can see, the two flags from Japan and the United States of America represent her nationality as a Japanese American citizen, also the start of the conflict. The brown house in the background represents the internment camp that she and the other Japanese Americans were sent to. The brown colour also represents her reliability in trying to adjust the injustice. Her closed eyes represent that she ignored the offer from the court to only release Mitsuye herself and stayed with her community. The balance represents the justice that she fought for. I made it black because it is a dark time for Mitsuye and all the Japanese Americans in the internment camp. I also drew a dandelion, as dandelions represent freedom. The reason I drew the balance in front of the dandelion is that the freedom of Japanese Americans was deprived and hidden by injustice. The flying dandelion represents that they got rescued from injustice and freedom. The fence in the very front also represents the freedom that got restricted. The bird in the background represents the hope of the Japanese Americans and Mitsuye. I put a light in the dark night because Mitsuye was like a light that set the Japanese Americans free from the internment camp.

My project, highlighting the important work of Mitsuye Endo, will be showcased at our upcoming virtue art show, open to all members of the St. Mildred's-Lightbourn community. This project will also link to our school-wide focus on The Virtues Project (www.virtuesproject.com). It will also

be shown through a weblink on www.smls.on.ca, as a virtual gallery, open for viewers worldwide.