

Impact Statement

Callie Lonowski, Grade 11.

***Residing Within the Stars: Eugene Shoemaker*, 2024.**

Watercolor, colored pencil, and graphite on paper, 11.5 x 16 inches.

Brea Olinda High School, Brea, CA

Unsung Hero: Gene Shoemaker

After the last bits of daylight are embraced by the tranquillness of nightfall, one can only look up and see the billions upon billions of stars that are embedded in a moonlit sky. That feeling is something that cannot be explained, but experienced. I believed that I could capture the beauty of Eugene's story through my art, sharing his experiences as a geologist and astronomer. The reason I chose him was simply because I saw his life as something extraordinary. Hoping I too can fulfill this life with purposeful accomplishments, leaving a lasting impact and inspiring generations to come.

Eugene Shoemaker co-founded the field of astrogeology, where he applied his expertise of geology, in which he earned a bachelor's degree in the Institute of Technology, to his fascinations in celestial bodies. After joining the USGS (The United States Geological Survey), Shoemaker explored the fields that piqued his interest. As he collaborated with NASA, he played a crucial role in exploring various aspects of planetary geology research, training astronauts, and ensuring their safety in expeditions to the moon. Eugene hoped to someday travel to the moon, but unfortunately suffered Addison's disease which affected his health, leaving his dreams unfulfilled. His life tragically ended in the event of a car accident, leaving his wife, Carolyn, the only survivor. In a way to honor him, his ashes were buried on the moon during a lunar mission. He forever became a part of the celestial body he studied and cherished his whole life.

I wanted to express in my artwork his insatiable curiosity that led him to groundbreaking discoveries such as the Comet Shoemaker-Levy 9 in 1993. The Shoemaker-Levy 9 was a comet in which its fragments collided with Jupiter over a span of 6 days, providing researchers with valuable insights into planetary motion. The shooting comets in my piece represents his legacy. Like a comet, he explored unknown parts of space and left a trail that many will follow. His perseverance brought contributions to impact crater research, allowing our understanding of them to advance. I admire how his career was gradually built on his study of impact craters, to becoming a co-founder of astrogeology. I've portrayed the start of his career in my composition as it was the very thing that introduced him to new heights. The sunset sky behind the meteor crater symbolizes renewal, and although he takes on new opportunities beyond geology, he will always stay true to himself and push forward towards his goals. His journey in the fields he studied reminded me of my journey in art. In a way, I see myself in Shoemaker. I aspire to master art, something I truly have a passion for, and become a source of inspiration so that others can follow in my footsteps as well.

My art piece, *Residing Within the Stars*, is composed of a combination of acrylic paints and color pencil. My art aims to captivate Shoemaker's adventurous spirit using details to intricately depict significant pieces of his life, allowing the viewer to immerse themselves in parts of his

journey. The astronaut on the moon conveys the dreams he once had and the accomplishments he achieved in order for others to safely traverse the lunar landscape. Shoemaker believed in the power of exploration and that seeking the unknown will uncover mysteries beyond the boundaries of human comprehension.

I've learned that when representing a person's story through a craft, it is vital to acknowledge the aspects of a person's life that constructed their legacy and integrate it in a way that many can understand who they are as a person. During my process in my work of art, I've learned more about both Shoemaker and myself. If not for this entry, I might not have been acquainted with Shoemaker's story and his amazing feats in life that shaped the scientific field of astrogeology. When looking through the amazing pieces other young artists have created, it encouraged me to push the limits of my artistic abilities, experimenting with new techniques and connecting more with a community full of diverse humans who express their ideas through their crafts. It has introduced me to a whole new world that I can involve myself more into. Opening myself to opportunities to achieve those dreams that are laid out for me will bring purpose and fulfillment to not only my life, but hopefully others as well.

Researching my Unsung Hero has been such a profoundly enriching journey. Shoemaker's tale will forever remain in my heart and through my art I seek to show a glimpse of his life. Now Eugene forever dwells in the cosmic expanse, and as we all look up from under the realm that separates the world from the heavens, we see him shine brighter than any other star in the sky.