

Impact Statement

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Reflection of Change: A Portrait of Jane Elliott, 2024.

Digital art.

Heritage High School, Conyers, GA

Ungsung Hero: Jane Elliott

Jane Elliott is American educator and anti-racism activist who dedicated her life to challenging societal norms when it comes to race and discrimination. Born in 1933 in Riceville, Iowa, Elliott gained recognition for her groundbreaking "Blue Eyes/Brown Eyes" experiment the day after Martin Luther King Jr.'s assassination in 1968. Elliott's experiment aimed to teach the impact of discrimination by using eye color. The exercise involved separating her third-grade students based on eye color, assigning superiority to one group. Through this hands-on experience, she sought to give her students an understanding of racism and its effects. Jane Elliott has continued her activism by leading workshops and delivering lectures worldwide. I chose her because her activism reached me. When I was nine, my mother showed me her Red Table Talk interview. The interview moved me so much. I showed my father, and it prompted us to discuss race and discrimination and how it affects us today. What she said made me realize the importance of spreading awareness and having healthy conversations about race, so I wanted to draw her to continue the discussion.

In my artwork, I aimed to depict the two distinct aspects of Jane Elliott's activism. The black and white section represents her past work during the Blue Eyes/Brown Eyes experiment. It displays historical events like the civil rights movement and segregated classrooms, showing the political background of that period. Drawing Jane Elliott in black and white emphasizes the historical nature of this part and creates a sharp contrast with the other half of the drawing. On the other side, I focused on more recent political issues that Jane Elliott has addressed. This includes topics like police brutality and the Black Lives Matter (BLM) protests, which occurred in the present.

I chose these subjects to highlight that her activism has extended beyond the 1960s experiment. The artwork shows the connection between the past and present in Jane Elliott's activism. It underscores her ongoing commitment to addressing societal injustices across different periods. The use of color and her age in the drawing works with the photos on both sides that initially seem different but are similar. This shows that despite changing times, her dedication to stopping injustice has always stayed the same.

Reflecting on my artwork, I have an even stronger appreciation for Jane Elliott's activism. The inspiration behind my creation stems not only from the conversation with

my father but also from the broader discussions started by Elliott throughout the United States.

The goal of my artwork is to extend the reach of her message. I hope to reach a wider audience and create conversations in a way Jane Elliott would. The hope is that my artwork becomes a catalyst for discussions about social issues and inspires those who see it to spread their newfound knowledge. In this way, I hope my artwork becomes a way to highlight the significant impact of Elliott's work and encourage everyone to think about creating a more inclusive and diverse society.