

Impact Statement

Alexis Gypson, Grade 7

***My Seat on the Bus*, 2024.**

Acrylic on paper, 16 x 20 inches.

Ida B. Wells Academic and Performing Arts Complex, Jackson, MS

Unsung Hero: Claudette Colvin

Imagine someone trying to forcefully move you to the back off the bus, or even worse them kicking you off because of your skin color. Well because of Claudette Colvin you will never have to worry about being moved or kicked off a bus because of your race.

Hello, I'm Alexis Gypson and the hero I researched was Claudette Colvin. The Claudette Colvin story is similar to the famous Rosa Parks, but is often overlooked. What happened, you may ask, On March 2, 1955 young Claudette was arrested for refusing to get up from her seat and giving it to a white individual. This action caused a big spark in the Civil Rights movement causing other people to be as brave as her. Why is her story not as known? Her story is not as known because of the colorist images of her, more specifically her skin, hair, and also her being pregnant. I find it incredibly inspirational how she was both young and pregnant and still had no fear of standing up for herself and causing a spark in the movement at just 15!

In my artwork I wanted to mostly express her being at the front of the bus and her sitting smiling at the viewer knowing that her power from that one day will change history forever. Having me look at her shows how I am inspired by her and her actions to do what's right. There are many things I admire about her as a role model and my role model, with her character traits being brave, confident, and courageous I am completely inspired to do what's right like she has.

I have shown her being at the front of the bus and also me staring in admiration of her actions soon to come. I have also shown how the bus is split in half in 2 different time periods, one being 1955 and one being 2024. I admire her in many ways, whether it's her bravery, or it's her determination for the movement of civil rights.

By the pleasure of doing this painting I've learned more about who my hero was, how she changed the civil rights movement, and most importantly more about me. With me doing this painting I've realized that if she never fought for her rights on the bus, I most likely wouldn't have the privilege to have free seating on my bus. Her sitting on the bus was a privilege and me sitting on the bus is a regular occurrence. I will be teaching and showing my artwork in many ways. I will be presenting my artwork in elementary classes, showing my artwork in the yearly art shows, and displaying my work online. I, Alexis Gypson thank you for the chance to use my talent to explore and learn more about Claudette Colvin and be able to show my art and her amazing story in the world.