

## Impact Statement

Haley Turman, Grade 9.

***Another Day at the Diner***, 2019.

Acrylic on paper, 18 x 24 Inches.

Bishop McGuinness High School, Oklahoma City, OK

Unsung Hero: Clara Luper

I searched through the long list of heroes many times before choosing Clara Luper. Every single person on the list was worthy and deserving of an art piece in their name. However, Clara Luper's story stood out the most to me. I chose her because she stood up for what she believed in and proved that one person can make a difference.

Clara Luper and a group of Youth Council members entered the segregated Katz Drugstore in downtown Oklahoma City on August 19, 1958. They sat a down at the lunch counter and asked to be served. They were refused because of their skin color but continued to sit peacefully at the drugstore counters after being asked leave. Nearly two days later Kansas City desegregated lunch counters all across the state. Clara Luper's sit in sparked sit ins all across the nation such as the Greensboro sit in and the Split T drive in boycotts. Her tactic of peaceful disobedience became a powerful strategy for activists during the Civil Rights Movement in the 50's. In my painting Clara Luper and her students are sitting at the Katz lunch counter. I wanted to make it feel like the audience was sitting right there in the drugstore with them by placing coffee pots and food on the counter in the background. I also hoped to give Mrs. Luper an expression of accomplishment on her face almost as if she knew she was the start of a much bigger change in civil rights.

I learned a lot about perseverance while doing this piece. It took me well over a month and I worked on it many for hours at a time. It inspired me that Clara Luper was from Oklahoma and her renowned sit in took place less than 10 minutes from where I live. She saw a problem in the world and instead of looking to other people to do something about it she went out and made the change herself. I truly believe that if anyone else began the sit in movements it would not have been as successful for it wasn't her acts that inspired others but her pure determination and attitude about the matter. She was not angry, and she wasn't looking for violent or forceful ways to desegregate her community. In the future I hope to be as successful and persistent as she was and change my community for the better.

I think that my piece is very powerful because there is not one like it. I was able to uniquely piece together what I knew about Clara Luper's sit in and bring it to life in one colorful collective piece of art. Creating this piece changed my outlook on life by giving me patience and diligence. I shared this experience in my school community by placing it in our annual art showcase. I also shared this experience with countless members of my friends and family because it has made me a stronger person and it has helped me grow in my artistic abilities.