

Impact Statement

Isis Salvanera, Grade 11.

Tones of the Heart, 2016.

Acrylic, pen, watercolor on paper, 12 x 9 Inches.

Salem High School, Virginia Beach, VA

Unsung Hero: Helen Taussig

Helen Taussig was a very hardworking individual whose work and research proved to help infants with cardiac birth defects. As a young child, her grandfather had helped Taussig to become a doctor. Her work also inspired future doctors to perform open-heart surgery. When she grew up, she worked at John Hopkins Hospital as a physician researching conditions of cardiac birth defects. As a female physician, she was the first woman in history to win one of the hugest awards at Johns Hopkins University of School of Medicine. Taussig won a few more awards for her newfound discovery of the problems of the heart. These awards included getting an award from President Lyndon Johnson for the Medal of Freedom. Taussig also became deaf while she pursued her career. Since her career involved the heart, instead of relying on sound, Taussig used the sense of touch. It's very inspiring to know that even with ear problems she still dedicated herself to work on the heartbeat. Another achievement she made was becoming the first female president of the American Heart Association. She received all these awards in under a span of about eleven years and proved that women can be as successful as men in the medical field. Taussig should've been much more popular for her work.

My vision behind my creative interpretation was a simple portrait of Helen Taussig herself and having a very detailed and elaborate background. She wasn't very recognized as a hero, so I made her simple and I didn't add much color to her own portrait. However, she made a huge impact on the most important organ in the human body, especially at birth. With that being said, I had added a heartbeat monitor in the background. The messy paint strokes of the background I made were to frame her portrait. The background also was a symbol of her hardships she faced while pursuing her career. Those hardships surrounded her but she still kept on going, which I tried to achieve through my piece. When I had researched pictures made of her, the main color I saw was blue. My composition was to make the portrait very simple and the background very detailed. My attempt to make the whole piece united was to use the heartbeat monitor to tie the portrait and background together. With Taussig looking directly to the front, I wanted to give the feeling of her looking at the viewer. The way I used to emphasize her eyes was by adding blue to them.

The process I used for this project was very tedious. I made many planning pages and started on each of them, and decided to scrap each of them as well. I finally decided to work simple yet complex. The mediums I used were watercolor, pen, and acrylic paint. For the portrait I decided to use watercolor and pen. For the background it was made to look like an elaborate paint palette. The heartbeat monitor was one of my first ideas to add in, and so I added it to make the whole piece come together.