

## Impact Statement

Samarra Prasetio, Grade 8

***A Voice in White*, 2025**

Colored pencil on paper, 12 x 18 inches

Haas Hall Fayetteville, Fayetteville, AK

Unsung Hero: Kadambini Ganguly

Kadambini Ganguly, one of the first female doctors to graduate from India, accomplished many achievements such as her contribution to medicine and her activism for the Indian Women Rights Movement. I found her to be incredibly inspiring and connecting to Asians because she represents what it means to rise in unfair rules and cultural traditions in a time where women were given very few rights and opportunities. She didn't just become the first female doctor to graduate from India, she fought for women's equality, education, and healthcare. Growing up, Kadambini faced many challenges but still was determined. During her time, girls barely had the opportunity to go to school as such people believed that women should stay and take care of the house. She was fortunate to grow up in a family that believed in equality and supported women's education. This gave her the chance to study and go to school. Although she was given the opportunity to go to school, she would receive constant criticism and resistance. Many expected her to marry young and become a housewife, but she broke those beliefs and pursued what she wanted, education and a career. Becoming a working woman, especially a doctor, she would often get judged and be looked down upon, but she didn't let those hardships break her. Instead, she became a hero to future generations and a fighter for women's rights.

Dr. Ganguly spoke against the injustices women had to face such as the purdah system and the lack of education given to women. She advocated in the social reform movement alongside her husband. She focused on women's health and practiced Western medicine, specializing in obstetrics and gynecology. Her achievements inspired many Indian women to pursue education and careers and changed people's views on women's roles in society. She became a symbol of empowerment, portraying that women can be both educated and independent while still contributing to society. I titled my art piece *A Voice in White* because she spoke and gave a voice for women's rights and healthcare while being a doctor. To draw this out, I sketched with vibrant color pencils. I used a variety of colorfulness to paint her strong spirit and bravery. My color scheme highlights the positive future she helped create, and celebrates her achievements, resilience, and impact. It's more than a portrait; it is a powerful tribute to her courage and impact.

In my portrait, I drew her in the middle to resemble the importance and impact she had on others. I used the right side to illustrate the past things that helped contribute to who

she became in the future. While on the left side, it pictures her achievements in the future that helped shape the world. To image her past, I drew the Indian flag, an anatomy book, and an oil lantern. The Indian flag represents her heritage and symbolizes her role in India's awakening to politics and society. The anatomy book shows her interest in the medical field and her education. It represents her resilience and proves that women can succeed in academics and professional fields. The oil lantern represents her activism, hope, and guidance. She gave light to women that were kept in the darkness and fought for their freedom. I used the light from the oil lantern to reflect onto the anatomy sketch pad, showing their notable influence that affected society. On the left side I drew a medical Sanskrit, a dove, and a lotus flower. The medical Sanskrit gives a symbolic representation of her becoming the first Indian woman doctor and of women skills in science and medicine. My scroll translates, "That which describes what is wholesome and unwholesome for life, happiness and sorrow, beneficial and harmful, and the measure of life—such a science is called Ayurveda." This quote holds a deeper meaning, picturing that Ayurveda is the science of understanding – it is a guide for life and with purpose. The dove portrays the peaceful change and her engagement in social reform, demonstrating how her voice helped speak for women's freedom and rights, without using violence or hatred. The lotus flower shows the growth and beauty rising from these conditions. It models her purity and strength for independence and women empowerment. As someone who is an Asian student, learning about Kadambini Ganguly didn't just make me feel proud—it lit something within me. To see someone from my culture rise in a world that constantly tried to hold her back reminded me that I come from a legacy built on strength and determination. Her story showed me that representation is not just about being seen, it is about being empowered. This artwork showed me the beauty of her hope, revealing a powerful truth that our gender does not define our potential, but carries our power, courage, and fearlessness. It made me believe now, more than ever, that I, too, can overcome barriers and make a difference.

#### References:

Paul, Sheuli, et al. "Dr. Kadambini Ganguly (1861-1923): A Pioneer in Indian Medicine." *Cureus*, U.S. National Library of Medicine, 30 June 2024, [pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC11289354/](https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC11289354/).