

Impact Statement

Allie Quan, Grade 9

More Than Just Sharks, 2025

Colored pencil, graphite on paper, 14 x 17 inches

Private Art Studio, Little Neck, NY

Unsung Hero: Eugenie Clark

When I was younger, I used to fill sketchbooks with drawings of sharks. I didn't know much about them, but I knew that I loved them. Years later, I discovered Eugenie Clark, the woman who changed the way I viewed sharks. Her work felt incredibly special to me. She didn't just study sharks, she stood up for them. Through her research, she showed the world that sharks aren't mindless killers people made them out to be. Instead, she revealed their curiosity and intelligence, changing people's views for the better.

Eugenie Clark was not only a shark scientist but also changed people's thoughts about them. Back then, they were portrayed as mindless monsters and struck fear into a lot of people. Through her research, she revealed their curiosity, intelligence, and how important they are to the ecosystem. She even trained sharks to press targets for food which didn't seem at the time. She didn't stop there, she discovered many different species including the *Trichonotus Nikii*, and the *Squalus Clarke*, in other words (genies dogfish), named after her, honoring Eugene Clark's hard work. During her career, she conducted over 5000 diving trips, including 72 deep submersible dives. As a Japanese American woman working in a field mostly full of men, she showed that anyone who worked hard enough could make a difference. Eugenie Clark's determination and courage make her a role model to this day. She didn't only teach people about sharks, she taught them to be brave, determined, and strong.

To show how much this topic means to me, I wanted my drawing to feel like a dream. A quiet, colorful moment where the colors bring out nostalgia and a past, we all wish we could go back to. I used black and white for Eugenie Clark because she is not as well known today, almost like she's faded in the public's memory, but the colorful surroundings, alive with the legacy she left behind. She taught the public not to fear sharks, so I decided to create a piece that shows their hidden beauty instead of their danger. In my drawing, I wanted to capture her love and respect for sharks by placing her close to the animals she dedicated her life to.

Creating this work made me realize how important it is to stand up for what you believe in, just like how Eugenie Clark did. Even when people didn't understand she kept pushing. I want to do the same in my own way. This piece is my way of showing how much I care about sharks, and how much one person can change the world by not

giving up. I hope to share this piece with others through school art shows, online, and hopefully museums. I also want to keep creating art that brings back memories and sparks people's passion drawings that seem like nostalgic dreams you've had as a kid as well as heroes that protect misunderstood animals and the youth. I hope people see my work and feel like they can change the world.