



Impact Statement

Ivie Hunyh, Grade 11

Abbott's Impact

Colored pencil, marker, acrylic on paper, 14 x 24 inches

Los Oso High School, Rancho Cucamonga, CA

Unsung Hero: Isabella Aiona Abbott

I would walk outside and see trees: tall, short, leafless, green, or brown; it didn't matter, but they were there, soaking up the spotlight of the sun. Seaweed, on the other hand, was something I hardly thought about or recognized in poems. It may be something less noticeable, but not less notable.

Isabella Abbott was history's seaweed. Seaweed was an often-ignored part of the environment yet was vital for all life. Trees get credited for cleaning the atmosphere and producing oxygen, while seaweed provides more oxygen and is reduced to a hindrance to beach goers who try to run into the ocean. Isabella Abbott and her accomplishments were overlooked in favor of other people, who were still deserving of the spotlight, but it was unfair for Isabella Abbott.

I admired her diligence and her humility, her ability to let others have the spotlight, while working to help everyone. I admired how she was able to focus her life on a single goal of environmental sciences, especially since I had a passion for biology. She was inspirational for those wanting to break barriers. These factors motivated me to draw her and her story.

In many respects she was the "first." She was the first woman of color to earn a position as a professor of biology in Stanford. Hawaii declared her the First Lady Limu and later A Living Treasure. Abbott studied botany throughout her life, aiming for academic positions that were particularly difficult for women to gain in the early 1900s, and, at the same time, she was raising her daughter. Through her studies for universities, she worked for and the over 200 species of seaweed she discovered, some named after her, she made a name for herself in leading research for coral reefs, algae, and Hawaiian plant life. Her books describing the uses of seaweed inspired many people to turn their attention to it. She earned the Darbarker Prize, the Gilbert Morgan Smith Medal, and the Charles Reed Bishop Medal; rewards known for their prestige.

In my artwork I tried to demonstrate the sheer impact and number of achievements she accomplished in her life by organizing the background to be busy and overlapping. The background images of sea life and plant life illustrated what her work of research impacted and cultivated.

The two scenes of her in the top left and right corners demonstrated her hard-work ethic and dedication to the world of seaweed. Her books are spread out behind her like the knowledge is being pulled from her mind into the wider world.

The illustration of herself in the center was to bring focus that, she was the single person who created these books or impacted these environments; the detail of the paper she's holding going off the original space was meant to convey that she's still reaching out today and her work still impacts us; she not just a page in history. Her younger self was set with a determined stare, already at a young age she was thriving.

The seaweed trailing from the paper and around the drawings, was meant to demonstrate the erupting nature of her work, the bursting effect of her actions, rather than a static image on paper.

This artwork was created primarily through paint, markers, and color pencils. These choices were made for its vibrancy and "illustration" of life. These different materials were familiar to me, but it also helped show that Abbott's work and life was not a singular action, yet a collection of different focuses that made a valuable impact on the world.

Her story of dedication, focus, and hard work motivated me to keep trying. She inspired me to bring my attention towards a single outlet and put my energy towards it. She allowed me to have confidence and attempt to break barriers put in place by others or myself. Her life gave me security that something small like seaweed can be fundamental to the earth and perhaps my small passion for art can have the same reaching effect. No matter what passion someone wants to follow, it will impact the world. I hope my artwork can inspire others to seek their own passion or just pick up a pencil and draw, especially with the demotivating world of Ai. I want people to see Isabella Abbott and research their own heroes to tell their stories in their own art styles. Most of all, I want people to try; try their dreams, try their plans, try the little things in life, try to live up to the people they love, try to change the world, and never stop trying like Isabella Abbott.