



Impact Statement

Anne Marroquin, Grade 10

Being So Devine, 2026

Acrylic, watercolor on wood panel, 30 x 20 inches

PAAAS, Plainfield, NJ

Unsung Hero: Annie Bell Robinson Devine

A voice can carry power, power so influential and formidable that people are moved to action. A voice filled with truth and justice that can echo through history shaping lives and inspiring change. To have a voice is to be thunderous like a tiger's roar, to flourish and be gentle like a blooming flower. It is the ability to stand firm, even when the world resists you. This kind of voice that Annie Bell Devine possesses.

When I first heard Annie Bell Devine converse about the civil rights movement, the most notable thing about her was how passionate she was, especially in the way she spoke. She wasn't just a participant in history, she was a vocal advocate for her people, an inspiring activist who never feared in the face of oppression. As a woman fighting for justice in a deeply unequal society, she showed courage, resilience and determination. I admire her fearlessness and her ability to turn pain into purpose. Besides sharing a similar name which made me feel personally connected to her I saw in her someone who used her voice in the way I aspire to be boldly unapologetically, and for the good of others.

Throughout my life, I have witnessed discrimination within my own community. Being Hispanic allowed me to recognize how prejudice and injustice continue to affect people of color because of this I've always wanted to speak out against inequality, especially in situations involving racism and police brutality. However, expressing these thoughts has not always been easy. Art has become my voice, the language to when words fail me. In Annie Bell Devine, I see someone whose voice created real strangeness and that inspires me to use my own creative expression to do the same. I want to create artworks that show the reality of what many people go through to speak out at protest and advocate for others.

During the 1960s African Americans in the south faced extreme discrimination, including barriers that prevented them from voting. Devine was a key figure challenging these injustices, she was one of the plaintiffs in *United States vs. Mississippi*, a case that exposed the state's systematic denial of voting rights for African Americans. Her courage in standing up against these systems helped bring national attention to the issue and contributed to the passage of the voting rights act of 1965. This monumental law outlawed discriminatory voting practices and allowed millions of African Americans to finally exercise their right to vote. Devine also participated in protest and alongside other activists from rooster lives for quality. One moment that deeply affected me was learning about the three civil rights volunteers were murdered during this time despite the fear and grief surrounding such tragedies, Devine remained strong, continuing her fight for justice.

her resilience in the face of violence and loss demonstrates her unwavering commitment change through my research I came to understand her impact was not only political, but deeply human she gave hope to people who have been denied it for far too long.

In my artwork, *Being So Devine*, I sought to capture both the strength and symbolism of her legacy. I chose to depict her holding a scale, representing justice and inequality on one side stands a white child, calm, insecure while sitting down. While on the other side stands an African American girl symbolizing how society historically treated African Americans as inferior like an unbalanced scale. However, Devine is shown lifting the chains, restoring the balance representing how her role in the movement was breaking barriers of inequality. I chose vibrant colors throughout the piece to emphasize her powerful presence and inspiring influence. The flowers surrounding her are meant to showcase growth resilience in the way she flourished, despite facing adversity. Below the figures, there is a tiger to represent courage and strength, especially her bravery and confronted hatred and injustice. Above the scale, I wanted to include a second portrait of her looking upward to show Hope and her constant focus on a better future.

To create this piece, I use a combination of acrylic and watercolor paint. The acrylic allowed me to achieve a more bold and vivid color palette that reflected her powerful personality, while watercolor added more softness and depth. I also used small, layered brush drops inspired by impressionist techniques, like those used by Monet to create texture and movement. This combination helped me visually express both the intensity of her activism and the emotional depth of her story.

Creating this artwork has changed the way I see my own voice and role in the world, Annie Bell Devine story. Reminds me that even one person can make a lasting difference. It encourages me to speak out more confidently and use my arm as a tool for awareness and change. I hope to share this piece within my school and my community, maybe talking and sparking conversations about justice equality in the importance of standing up for what is right. Through *Being So Devine*, I want others to not only learn about her story but also feel inspired to find their own voice just like how I began to find mine.