

Impact Statement

Laila Dubon, Grade 10

Autherine Lucy Foster, 2026

Colored pencil, marker on matte board, 13 x 11.5 inches

Hartland High School, Hartland, MI

Unsung Hero: Autherine Lucy Foster

My Unsung Hero is Autherine Lucy Foster, a brave woman who helped change the history of civil rights in the United States. She was the first black student to attend the University of Alabama in 1956. During that time though, there were schools in the South that were still segregated, even after the Supreme Court ruled against it in *Brown v. Board of Education*. Autherine wanted to not only enroll into a school but also advocate and stand up for equal rights, even when it was difficult.

Autherine Lucy Foster had to endure many horrible things and being treated unfairly just for the color of her skin. She was harassed by crowds and eventually forced to leave the university for her own safety. Even though she ended up having to leave, her courage made a big impact. She opened the door for other black students to attend the school later. Her actions show that change can be possible, even when it feels like nothing is being done.

In my artwork, I wanted to incorporate the world around her at the time and of course the remarkable impact she has made on equal rights. I chose to create a collage styled piece as presented. The supreme court building in my piece represents the law and the fight for justice. The paper in the background refers to the court decision that made school integration possible. The protest and the signs the people hold up, like "Equal Rights" and "End racism," show the voices of the people who were fighting for change. They also remind us that this struggle was not just hers alone, but part of a larger movement.

I included a stack of books to represent education since her goal was to simply learn and go to school like anyone else. The feather and the ink symbolize writing and history, showing that Autherine's story is remembered. Then the graduation diploma at the bottom shows success, and not only hers, but for future generations who will benefit from her bravery, regardless of the obstacles she had faced through her journey because she had in the end got what she and everybody else deserved.

The flowers and leaves in this piece are mainly just for aesthetic purposes, but I also feel they do add a feeling of hope and growth. Just like how flowers grow and blossom over time, changes in society and its history also take time. They also soften the artwork and remind the viewers of it that positive things and outcomes can come from struggle. Through this artwork, I wanted to create something that is both captivating and meaningful. The collage style allowed

me to bring together all the different parts of history in one place. My goal was to help people understand who Autherine Lucy Foster was and why she matters because she deserves more recognition and praise. I also wanted the viewers to feel inspired by her courage and bravery.

The impact of this piece is to educate and remind people of the importance of standing up for what's right. It shows that the actions through others, even if it's just one person can in fact make a difference. By observing my artwork, I hope people can learn about her story and appreciate her incredible effort.