



Impact Statement

Jasmine Zhang, Grade 8

Shark Lady: Eugenie Clark, 2026

Marker, colored pencil on paper, 14 x 9 inches

Yun Hua Fang Art Studio, Saratoga, CA

Unsung Hero: Dr. Eugenie Clark

I specifically chose Eugenie Clark to honor her work on breaking stereotypes all around. Not only did Eugenie Clark break myths of sharks being mindless killers, but she also stood out to prove herself in a male dominated field of ichthyology.

Eugenie Clark grew up by spending her weekends at the aquarium. Her single mother would drop her off at the New York Aquarium before heading to work. There, Clark discovered her love for the ocean and marine life, wishing to swim with the sharks. Her dream came true as an adult, and she studied marine life, including sharks, while also diving to places very few people had explored such as the Red Sea. During this time, she discovered many species such as the Moses Sole, which released natural shark repellent when threatened. Her talks on the Red Sea and tales about the unusual creatures fascinated her audience of all ages. She taught about sharks and tried to scatter their bad reputation by showing that they were not mindless killers, such as the time she rode on the back of a whale shark. She never stopped diving, not until her last dive at 92. Her research greatly changed the way we view sharks today and she was dubbed the "Shark Lady".

In my depiction of Eugenie Clark, I showed her diving in the water, swimming with the sharks like she's always dreamed of. Since she strove to break stereotypes, I thought it would be nice to draw her swimming with the sharks but without a fearful look in her eyes. I wanted the drawing to look free and ecstatic, with her expression being one of joy and curiosity. And I made sure to have the sun shining down on her and the sharks to symbolize beauty and her love of the ocean. I chose a perspective of looking up from down to give the piece a sense of movement and flow, while also choosing a circular composition (notice how the shark and Eugenie kind of make a circle) to show a sort of bond and connection. For the materials, I used alcohol markers as a base, then added details with color pencil. And as a finishing touch, I added white posca to places that needed to be brightened.

After making this piece on Eugenie Clark, I feel inspired to explore and understand like the way she did and do my best to break untrue stereotypes in our society. Despite her success, the Shark Lady had also faced multiple challenges during her career such as gender discrimination, racial prejudice during World War II, and the hazardous diving conditions that people were accustomed to back then. However, despite all these obstacles that may have discouraged her from exploring and studying, she still persisted, all the way throughout her entire life. This

inspires me to overcome my own challenges, explore, and to not always believe social standards and beliefs set without question.

Overall, Eugenie Clark inspired many, including me, and not just regarding her study of marine life, but also for our own passions and interests. Regardless of discrimination or stereotypes, Eugenie Clark inspires people to pursue their dreams, and to be passionate about their work.