



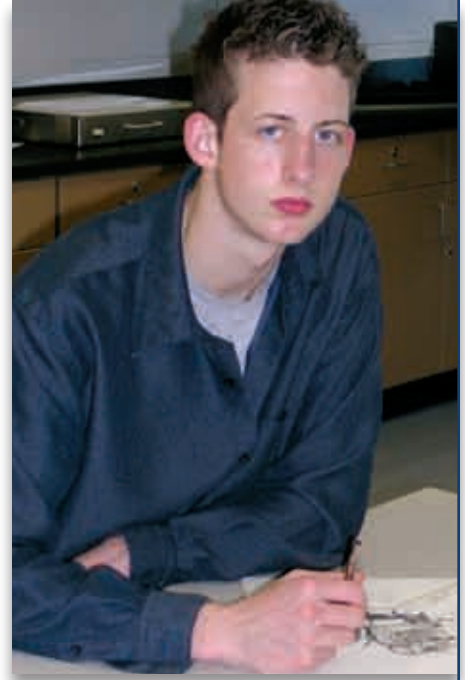
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Tyler Stewart  
photo by Chris Johnson

## Looking Through an Artist's Eye

By Natalie Medigovich

**THE POWER OF THE PEN** – or in this case, pencil – has been a topic for philosophers for ages. How can something so small make such a huge impact in a person's life? Public reactions to artistic endeavors correlate with the creator's gifts with the tool.

A "gift" is exactly what Little Elm High School junior Tyler Stewart has. Hand that boy a pencil and something to draw on, and he will "wow" you with ability beyond his 18 years. And he was a late bloomer to boot.

The young pencil sketch artist will never forget the Dallas schoolteacher, Mrs. Kent, who changed his perspective forever about education when she handed him a sheet of paper and a pencil and said "draw" when the middle schooler was in another one of his defiant moods.

Stewart remembers being, by his own description, a "really wild and hyper kid" who rebelled a bit more than typical preteen angst.

"She really calmed me down," Ty reflected with admiration in his voice. "I still keep in touch with her and see her once a month. I really think it's because of Mrs. Kent that I can do what I do."

Though teachers in Ty's elementary school thought the boy was indeed talented, it was not until after he

entered Griner Middle School in Oak Cliff, an arts magnet school in the Dallas ISD, that he truly blossomed.

"It was really different at Griner," said Ty, who convinced his parents to let him attend the south Dallas school. "It was one of the best times I've had, even with the long bus rides." Ty traveled from his mother's home in North Dallas to the school. Three years ago he moved to Little Elm to live with his father and stepmother. "I would do it all over again. They had great art teachers," Ty declared.

Dad, Gary Stewart, is proud of his son but admits Ty did not get any artistic talent from him.

"I work in the trade show business and have an eye for color, but that's about it," Gary said. "Ty has an enormous talent that he needs to develop. We don't know where he will go with it. I brought him to work with me one day and he met a co-worker who is a degreed designer. What made an impact on Ty were the opportunities available for a person with a college degree. Ty said he is already working on earning college credits while enrolled at Little Elm High School, thanks to another influential art teacher. "Coach" Mark Parr was able to recognize Ty as a "diamond in the rough" having been a teacher for 25 years, the last 12 at LEHS.

"Ty was the first freshman in art that I pulled out of class to put in an Advanced Placement class," Parr said. "He is as good as I have ever had, in the top two or three extremely talented artists in my years of teaching. I told him if he could complete 40 pieces for me by the end of the year he could earn college credit. I know he can do it; he will make a nice living whatever direction he goes with art."

Tyler is currently working on a pencil sketch of his grandfather on a tractor for his mother. He is also responsible for murals at his school as well as painting several friends skateboards. He has even done some commissioned pieces for people who ask.

"The most I've earned so far is \$230 for an Indian I drew," Tyler said, who prefers drawing people or animals. "I have five people who want me to do something for them right now. I'm trying to take it slow, but I think about college ten times a day."

After completing his dream of finishing college, watch for this talented local artist to become a great success. We can say, we knew him when...

*Natalie Medigovich is a freelance writer living in Frisco.*