

Tsawwassen teen wanted career in art from start

Now Garrett Campbell-Wilson will be able to achieve his dream, thanks to a scholarship to the prestigious Art Institute of Boston

BY DAN ROWE
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As a 12-year-old, Garrett Campbell-Wilson taped a hand-lettered sign to his bedroom ceiling. The message: "I should be drawing."

Campbell-Wilson figured that if he were lying on his back not

doing anything, the sign would remind him of his goal to become an artist.

"He wanted to be immersed in art, even at that stage," said his mother, Vena Campbell.

His father, Keith Wilson, said art has been important to his son since he was three years old. Campbell-Wilson this week took

a major step toward realizing his dream. The Tsawwassen resident, now 18, has won a \$28,000 US scholarship from the prestigious Art Institute of Boston.

Campbell-Wilson can't remember a time when he was not interested in art.

"It was pretty much an instinctive thing. I couldn't see myself

doing anything but art," he said.

In September, he will begin a four-year program at the school he had long hoped he would be admitted to.

"It was pretty good," he said of the scholarship announcement. "The price of tuition at the school is pretty monumental and any financial help is pretty

incredible," he said.

Originally, Campbell-Wilson had wanted to go to school in New York, but after some research and some time spent chatting with staff at the Boston school, he felt that institute and that city were better suited to his interests.

Campbell-Wilson has wanted

to study art throughout his young life. Before starting at high school — he is currently writing his final set of exams at South Delta secondary — he wrote a paper calling for people in middle school to be permitted to follow their heart in choosing subjects.

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Over the years, he has honed his skills at Arts Umbrella on Granville Island. He began taking part in various programs there when he was seven years old. Three years ago, he was admitted to the Buschlen Mowat Gifted Teen Scholarship Program, which accepts a dozen teens a year and provides them with advanced instruction that would be unavailable at their high school.

Barry Mowat, one of the program's co-founders, said that most of the students in the program who were hoping to move on to a post-secondary fine arts program were successful, but Campbell-Wilson's accomplishment stands out.

"Even if you're in basketball or hockey, this is a pretty big scholarship. In the arts, we're talking about something really special," he said.

Campbell-Wilson said the program for gifted teens and all

his time at Arts Umbrella have been absolutely crucial to his development.

"[These things] gave me the chance to explore different media and find out what I really enjoy doing, it's a really good program for youth artists," he said.

"They really teach you the skills that you need for higher education."

To apply to the Art Institute he had to send in a slide portfolio of 20 art works and complete a home project in a set amount of time. For this, he did drawings of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Malcolm X, plus a sculpture of a slave.

The project concentrated on one of the issues that Campbell-Wilson has been exploring — his African heritage, according to his instructor Fiona Mowat.

Campbell-Wilson points out that his interests range far beyond notions of race and politics, however. His primary fascination, he says, is with sci-

ence fiction, especially movies and video games, and the possibilities that they open to artists.

"With movies you can create anything you want and integrate it from there. Conceptual design and creating robots or characters with a movie type of influence, that's my passion," Campbell-Wilson said.

The black-belt in taekwondo has been inspired most by films like *Final Fantasy*, *Gladiator*, *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* and even *Finding Nemo*. He is, of course, pumped for *The Hulk*.

But the thing that Campbell-Wilson loves most about art is its expressive possibility. He knows there is so much more he can accomplish.

"It's limitless. You can do anything nowadays. Thirty years ago, artists had limits, but now, with computers becoming faster, you can create whatever your mind can conceive."

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Artist Garrett Campbell-Wilson has won a \$28,000 US scholarship to Boston's art institute.