

To Whom It May Concern:

Grant Whitsitt is one of those special students who a teacher will remember forever! I have known Grant since he came to my classroom as a sophomore in 2009. Since that first encounter, I have grown to know Grant as a very talented former student, an impressive emerging artist, and a reliable colleague. This young man is filled with more talent and creative energy than any student I have ever had the pleasure of teaching.

When Grant started looking at colleges, I was thrilled that he was interested in Savannah College of Art where he was accepted with one of their largest scholarships. While there, he created a short film *Jumpin' Jack*, which has won awards from and inclusions in film festivals all over the world. After graduation from SCAD, he returned to Jackson, TN (home) for a short time before continuing to pursue his career in animation in Halifax, Nova Scotia. This time of transition for Grant was both a personal and professional blessing to my own family. In 2016, my daughter was involved in an almost fatal car accident in Knoxville, TN. Because Grant was in Jackson where I was still teaching at University School of Jackson, I reached out to see if he would be interested in starting off my school year as a substitute art teacher. I felt confident that this former student and recent college graduate would not only be able to fill my shoes in my absence but would get my students off to the start that they might miss with a substitute with less art experience. I was NOT disappointed! I even convinced him to come to school once a week to work with my "Digital Tools" Class after I returned... at least until he left for Nova Scotia.

Then in the summer of 2017, I was hired as the Visual Art Director for the Tennessee Arts Academy. We have several restrictions when hiring our instructors for the Academy, among them being that our instructors must reside out of the state of Tennessee. My first thought was I need to get Grant as an instructor for TAA while I still CAN. Since he had moved to Canada, he met the out of state requirement. My only concern was his youth since our instructors are usually more seasoned. He agreed to be one of our instructors for the 2017 Tennessee and I was not disappointed. His youth and energy were an inspiration to our participants.

I feel confident that if Grant is offered the position as a Lecturer in the animation department, he will fulfill the position with the creative energy that makes him the talented artist that he is. It is with much pleasure and without hesitation that I recommend Mr. Grant Whitsitt for this position.

Feel free to contact me if you have any questions: Libby Lynch, Visual Art Director for the Tennessee Arts Academy, 731-695-3127.

Best Regards, Libby Lynch