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Do we need more famous fluid dynamicists? SHANON RECKINGER, Montana State University, BETHANY BRINKMAN, James Madison University, RAENITA FENNER, Loyola Maryland University, MARA LONDON, Gonzaga University — One of the main reasons students do not join the STEM fields is that they lack interest in technical topics. But do people (young students, the general public, or even our own engineering students) know what an engineer is and/or does? In this talk, results from a recent study on the perceptions of different professions will be presented. The study was designed based off of “draw-an-engineer” and “draw-a-scientist” tests used on elementary schools kids. The idea is to have participants visualize professionals (engineers, lawyers, and medical doctors were chosen for this study), and determine if there are any patterns within different demographic groups. The demographics that were focused on include gender, race, age, college major, highest level of education, and profession. One of the main findings of this survey was that participants had the most difficult time visualizing an engineer compared to a lawyer or a medical doctor. Therefore, maybe we need more famous engineers (and fluid dynamicists)?

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