Carlton Area Chamber of Commerce

Pictured L-R: Ryan Schmidt, Warren Gardner, Denis Sauter

Carlton Daze 2026 Parade Grand Marshals

Honoring the Past, Celebrating the Present, and Looking Forward to the Future.

As one chapter closes in Carlton and a new one begins with the consolidation of the school district, Carlton Daze 2026 provides the perfect opportunity to celebrate the remarkable legacy and lasting impact of the Carlton School District on our community.

This year, we are honored to recognize Carlton's past and present by naming three individuals as Parade Grand Marshals. Each has made a profound impact on the school district through decades of service, leadership, and dedication to students. While this trio represents only a small part of the Bulldog pride that lives within community members, staff, alumni, and students, they embody the spirit and tradition that have defined Carlton schools for generations.

As we turn the page and begin a new era as the Carlton-Wrenshall School District, we invite everyone to take a walk down memory lane and celebrate the people who helped shape our schools and community.

Warren Gardner

Warren taught at Carlton High School from 1963 to 1993, serving 30 years as a geography and history teacher. During his career, he also taught journalism and Native American studies.

Warren lived in both Carlton and Wrenshall throughout most of his teaching years. His wife's family has roots in the Carlton School District spanning more than 75 years, making his career especially meaningful. As Warren reflected, it was an honor to teach where our family was.

A passionate supporter of Bulldog athletics, Warren spent many years coaching junior high football and later became a familiar voice announcing varsity football games. He also assisted with basketball games doing the official scorebook. When asked about his favorite memories from Carlton, Warren simply said there were too many wonderful students and experiences to count.

"It was the best 30 years of my life."

Denis Sauter

Denis taught English at Carlton High School from 1972 to 2005, dedicating 33 years to the district. Denis and his wife, Anne, moved to Carlton in 1972 and raised five children, all of whom graduated from Carlton High School.

Beyond inspiring hundreds of students in the classroom, Denis served as the school's play director for 34 years, athletic director, coach of numerous sports, and leader of countless extracurricular activities. Under his direction, school musicals, homecomings, and community events became memorable experiences that often rivaled those of much larger schools.

Reflecting on his time in Carlton, Denis shared, "Like many small schools, my kids were involved in everything, and I got to coach them and see them every day as students and athletes."

His dedication, passion, and commitment to students helped create generations of lasting memories.

Ryan Schmidt

Ryan has been teaching at Carlton High School for 16 years, first teaching in the special education department and later as a history/social studies teacher. A lifelong Carlton resident, he graduated from Carlton in 1993 and has remained deeply committed to the district ever since.

Ryan's five children have attended Carlton schools, and he served on the Carlton School Board from 2007 to 2010. Beyond his work in the classroom, Ryan has given countless hours to Carlton's baseball and softball programs. He served as varsity head coach for 14 years and has volunteered with the youth baseball and softball association for 30 years, including 15 years as president.

Ryan also founded a strong Youth in Government program at Carlton, served as athletic director, and advised numerous homecoming and dance committees. His service extends beyond the school as well, having served six years on the Carlton City Council.

Today, Ryan continues to inspire students as an educator for the new consolidated district teaching at Silver Creek Secondary School while also fostering a love of reading through NP Junction, the bookstore he and his family opened in Carlton to support local authors, readers, and literature throughout the community.

Celebrating the Past, Embracing the Future

Although the district consolidation officially took effect on July 1, we are excited to celebrate the rich history, traditions, and memories of the Carlton School District while looking forward to the opportunities ahead for the Carlton-Wrenshall School District.

Join us during Carlton Daze 2026 as we honor these Grand Marshals and the generations of students, staff, families, and community members who have made Bulldog history possible.