

Edmonton Catholic Schools mourns passing of beloved superintendent Joan Carr

Joan Carr, a nationally respected superintendent and passionate advocate for Catholic education, has died of cancer, the Edmonton Catholic School Division announced Feb. 9.



Joan Carr had served as superintendent of Edmonton Catholic Schools since 2006. Photo courtesy of ECS

Carr had served with Edmonton Catholic Schools for 45 years. In 2006 she was appointed superintendent, a position in which she was responsible for over 4,200 employees and 44,000 students in 95 Catholic schools. In that role, she was known as an educational innovator and forged community partnerships with groups ranging from Indigenous Elders to trade unions to the Edmonton Public Library and Edmonton Symphony Orchestra.

“Joan will always be known and loved as an individual with a passion for Catholic education and bringing students, staff, and families into a closer relationship with Jesus,” the Edmonton Catholic School Division said in a prepared statement.

“Her legacy is part of the fabric of Edmonton Catholic Schools. Joan was passionate about providing students with a broad spectrum of faith-based programming to choose from in order to reach their fullest potential. This has established the character of our jurisdiction as one which provides for

personalized programming to engage student gifts, talents, and passions through high quality Catholic educational experiences.”

Most of all, she loved children, and made it her mission to provide the best possible experiences for those under her care.

“Joan put students at the centre of every decision we made,” said Laura Thibert, chair of the ECS Board of Trustees. “The board is heartbroken to lose her, as she was not only an amazing leader but dedicated her life to Catholic education and touched the hearts of everyone she knew. Her legacy will live on forever.”

In 2016, Carr was recognized by the Canadian Association of School System Administrators as Canadian Superintendent of the Year. At the time, she spoke about her love for the work and a deep faith that inspired her daily.

“I see hope in everything, and I really believe that we are here to do God’s work; we are here to do God’s will,” Carr said in an interview with the *Western Catholic Reporter*. “I feel that I’ve been called to this life of service, and I can never rest until I feel that I’m doing the absolute best that I can do.”

Edmonton Archbishop Richard Smith knew Carr well for her work with the school division and many other Catholic causes.

“We offer our sincere condolences to Kevin and the Carr family,” he said in a prepared statement. “Our Catholic community across Edmonton is also mourning the loss of Joan. She was a true gift to her family and community, an inspiration to her ECS colleagues, and a generous friend. We are grateful to God for her presence among us and will miss her dearly. May she find eternal rest and peace in the embrace of the saviour she loved.”

Carr was an active supporter of Newman Theological College and ensured that ECS teachers were given the time they needed to study there to enhance their qualifications. She was a regular donor to and promoter of the Newman Golf Classic and the Faith, Fitness, and Fun Run, which raise funds for the college and St. Joseph Seminary.

A member of St. Joseph’s Basilica Parish, she was active in the Catholic community and beyond. She chaired the Sign of Hope Campaign for Catholic Services in 2007 and served on the board of directors of the Friars Ball. She served with several community groups, including the Mayor’s Task Force to End Poverty, Junior Achievement of Northern Alberta’s Board of Directors, and the TELUS World of Science Foundation. .

The funeral will take place on Saturday, February 15, at 10:30 a.m. with Archbishop Richard Smith presiding at St. Joseph Basilica, 10044 -113 Street, NW. It will be livestreamed at <https://www.hdezwebcast.com/show/joan-carr?pass=57087c8bcd0139f6eec1badf6d9d560f>.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the Kevin and Joan Carr Endowment Fund with the Edmonton Catholic Schools Foundation, www.ecsfoundation.ca.