

# Woodstock Community Unit School District 200

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## Woodstock High School to celebrate 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

Woodstock High School staff and alumni are excited about celebrating the South Street building's 100th anniversary in 2021.

A committee of community members, former educators and current staff has met periodically over the past year to talk about how best to celebrate the centennial, which will be dependent on COVID-19 restrictions.

Matt Boland, assistant principal of Woodstock High School, is among those leading the efforts to mark the anniversary for a building that has been one of the key centers of Woodstock and the surrounding area for generations.

"There is an incredible rich history of tradition in the community and we would like to share this great opportunity to celebrate with our students," Boland said.

While the school community dates back further and was once housed in the building where Woodstock City Hall now stands, the South Street building opened in 1921.

Five additions were built onto the original structure. The first, in 1939, included a swimming pool. Other additions were made in the 1950s with areas for graphic arts, an auto shop, a gymnasium, more classrooms and a music area. Another addition on the western portion of the building was constructed in the 1970s and other renovations took place over the remaining decades.

The hope is to coincide much of the celebration with Homecoming week, which is currently scheduled for the weekend of Sept. 24, but no dates have been set since it's difficult to determine what kind of gatherings will be possible then.

Tony Casalino, who was the WHS theater director for more than 30 years, is a member of the centennial committee and said he is eager to help plan events to celebrate Blue Streak history.

"Having started at the age of 21, I feel like I grew up in that building. I have kept in touch with many of my former students and look forward to inviting alumni and past staff members back to WHS to celebrate the building's first 100 years," Casalino said.

In the meantime, a [100th anniversary page](#) has been created on the Woodstock High School website as well as a [Facebook page](#). Committee members are also hoping to use the celebration as a way to connect alumni.

An alumni exhibit is also being curated in a separate space at the high school, which is already filled with historical Blue Streaks treasures.

“Many longtime residents have generations of family members that have attended Woodstock High School and have been very generous in sharing their personal memories and artifacts from the past that we keep and display in our WHS Alumni Room,” Boland said.

Students are getting involved, too. Rich Stiles, WHS band director, says he and his colleagues from orchestra and choir are preparing for musical performances. Teacher Steve Thompson said his social media marketing class plans to help promote the celebration. WHS senior Quentin Crown-Mitchell also designed an anniversary logo in his graphic arts class.

Retired English teacher Caryl Dierksen, a member of the committee, said the whole Blue Streak community is looking forward to commemorating the milestone.

“I have so many happy memories of my years at WHS. Just walking into the building again makes me smile. It’s the people that I remember most fondly. I can’t wait to celebrate the Centennial with former students, their parents, and my colleagues,” she said.

Connee Meschini, a student assistance counselor at both high schools, is also on the committee and has deep family ties to Woodstock High School.

“It is a great place to work where everyone helps each other and believes in helping all students,” Meschini said. “It is caring and conscientious and has such school pride. My mother went to WHS in the late ‘30s and had such pride then, too.”