

## Team 3042 Woodie Flowers Finalist Award Nomination 2019

It is said “Don’t wait for opportunity. Create it.” Mr. Carter embodies this and so much more. Through hundreds of hours, countless advice, and endless dedication to our team and other FIRST teams, he truly exemplifies FIRST’s principles while inspiring the students around him do the same. Mr. Carter knows that building students one robot at a time is what truly matters.

Mr. Carter dedicates approximately 900 hours to FIRST each year, roughly 500 of which he spends helping Cobalt Catalysts. Although the numbers themselves are astounding, it is his support, dedication, and consistency that has made him so inspiring.

After deciding to mentor Cobalt Catalysts in 2013, he went on to help start four FIRST Tech Challenge teams at Cobalt Catalysts home school, coaching them along with Cobalt Catalysts. He heads one of the four Minnesota FIRST Tech Challenge leagues. In addition, he is a tournament director. He has even coached a FIRST Lego League, showing his commitment to all levels of FIRST.

Unequivocally, he was instrumental in helping us go from a small team of only a few students to where it is now, with over thirty students and many experienced mentors to help them. Through coaching these teams, he has inspired countless students to further their passion for engineering while teaching important skills in leadership.

Mr. Carter inspires team members to come up with designs, and his work as a lead robot inspector often causes him to be the voice of reason in many of Cobalt Catalysts discussions. He keeps them grounded in order to use the student’s ideas along with building a legal robot. He uses his knowledge of FIRST and its history to show students successful designs so that they can create successful designs of their own. He constantly shares ideas and details about strategy, robot design, and more.

Along with engineering, Mr. Carter also teaches students important life skills that go beyond the scope of building a robot. He helps students gain confidence and skills in leadership and making connections with people. When new students join the team, he helps them find a place where they can excel and reach their fullest potential. One student recalls joining the team as a shy freshman unsure of what she wanted to do in robotics. Mr. Carter helped her find a place on the strategy team, and she later used the leadership skills she gained as strategy lead to becoming the captain of the engineering team. Another student says that he helped her learn how to talk to other teams, refs, judges, and adults in general, along with helping her fill out job referrals.

Always willing to volunteer no matter what the task, Mr. Carter has been a constant example of selfless service because of his passion for FIRST. Mr. Carter has helped inspire the students on Cobalt Catalysts and gain invaluable technical and life skills that will carry with them far into the future.