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CONVERSE

Summer 2018



**Celebrating Courage
& Charting the Future**



Celebrating Courage & Charting the Future

pg **06**

►
“Converse alumnae gathered on campus to kick off the yearlong celebration marking the 50th anniversary of Black women at Converse. The first two Black Converse students, **Freida Rogers Byrd '72** and **Margaret Jones Swindler '72**, stand at the left forefront.”

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Converse College



Making Her Own Way
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The Ride of the Valkyries
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A Message From the President

Dear Converse family and friends,

What an incredible year of scholarship and new adventures we have completed at Converse! Each of you plays an important role in our large and small successes every year, as we are one Converse community spread across the globe. Whether near or far, we work together in myriad ways to make this institution great.

In celebration of the enriching diversity among us, the coming year marks the 50th anniversary of our first Black students. It will be a time to both reflect and to look forward. We hope you will join us to mark this important milestone on September 21, 2018, during Opening Convocation, followed by an afternoon of inspiring events led by and open to alumnae, faculty, staff and students.

Throughout this magazine, you will read story after story that shares the heart and soul of Converse. It is readily apparent that a key focus for our College is engagement with the community and partnerships with local employers as we collaborate to create an education-to-employment pipeline. This work is part of the Chamber of Commerce's OneSpartanburg economic and community development plan.

We have so much more to share with you: Kaylee Boalt and Joe Dunn's co-presentation to journalists from 12 NATO countries at the US Department of State's invitation, Gillian Horn's biochemistry research and recognition as a Goldwater Scholarship finalist, our new bachelor's and master's programs in healthcare administration, our trailblazing work in autism education, grant-funded outreach to school children through the arts, a new travel scholarship endowment created by retiring professor Brant Bynum, and our new satellite location at the University Center in Greenville. We celebrate the support of individuals, of family foundations, and of state and federal

grants that expand students' access to Converse and grow our capacity to serve them in new ways. We highlight alumnae accomplishments and give thanks for their desire to mentor current students, to share life lessons with our students, and to leverage their connections to bring role models to campus such as our military's first female four-star general at commencement. And much more!

As I reflect on the past year, I am immensely grateful for each student, faculty and staff member, parent, alumna, and friend. Our College needs your support – every year – in order to flourish. We are committed to operating efficiently, but tuition covers only a portion of the cost to educate a student. Our students need scholarship support today more than ever before, as their numbers grow and their needs increase. Converse is doing good and important work that is worth your investment and provides infinite returns.

As Benjamin Franklin said, "An investment in knowledge pays the best interest." Take part in your College, in many different ways, and know that you have made a lasting difference.

With appreciation and excitement about the journey ahead,

Krista L. Newkirk
President

Celebrating Courage & Charting the Future

Commemorating 50 Years of Black Women at Converse

Fifty years ago this fall, Freida Rogers Byrd and Margaret Jones Swindler became the first Black students to enroll at Converse College. In celebration of this milestone, we reflect on our heritage and explore the work still ahead of us with a year-long series, *Celebrating Courage & Charting the Future: Commemorating 50 Years of Black Women at Converse*.

The series began last February with a panel of distinguished alumnae sharing their experiences. It continues through the 2018-2019 year with feature stories highlighting individual alumnae. On September 21, we will commemorate the anniversary during Opening Convocation, lunch and an afternoon of special topic discussions. Finally, in the spring of 2019, the series will culminate with an exhibition highlighting Converse's history of African American students developed by students of Dr. Angela Elder as part of a class research project.



▲
Alumnae Panelists (from left to right)

Joy Danielle Stoney '00
Attorney and Owner, Stoney Law Firm LLC

Stinson Woodward Ferguson '07
Associate Attorney with Southern Environmental Law Center and Director of Organizational Development for J.W. Woodward Funeral Home Inc.

The Honorable Deadra L. Jefferson '85
Circuit Judge, South Carolina 9th Judicial Circuit

Phyllis Perrin Harris '82
Senior Vice President and General Counsel Legal Operations, Walmart Stores Inc.

Dr. Kay E. Woodward
President, J.W. Woodward Funeral Home Inc.
Converse's first Black faculty member

Candy Moore '93
Senior Vice President, Community Development Manager Southeast Region, Wells Fargo

Dawn Davis Deck '99
Director of Planned Giving, ETV Endowment of SC Inc.

Dr. Jayne Stewart Reuben '85
Associate Professor, Texas A&M University, College of Dentistry

Last February, nearly 100 Black alumnae returned home to Converse for an afternoon of fellowship over lunch, a panel discussion with distinguished alumnae, and a reception hosted by Converse students.

Seven Black alumnae and Converse's first Black faculty member gathered with President Krista Newkirk in front of a packed house in Montgomery Student Center. They discussed their Converse experiences, creating a culture that embraces diversity, how they overcome hurdles in their professional lives, the impact of mentors, and how we can strengthen the network between alumnae and students.



**COMMEMORATING 50 YEARS OF
BLACK WOMEN AT CONVERSE
1968-2018**

**JOIN US TO CELEBRATE
at Opening Convocation
September 21, 2018**

- Procession of Black alumnae
- Gospel Choir performance
- Lunch with the Converse community
- Special topic breakout discussions
- Reservations requested

Learn more about the 50th Celebration Series and register your participation at www.converse.edu/CelebratingCourage



A Tribute to Our Trailblazers

We would not be telling this story today were it not for the courage of our first two students, Freida Rogers Byrd and Margaret Jones Swindler, to come forward and share their stories. They blazed a trail at Converse that at times, I'm sure, was not easy. Their stories are part of a long history of perspectives and experiences by our Black and minority students.

President Newkirk

On Choosing Converse

We set out one Saturday to visit several schools. When I got to campus, I stood on back campus and looked at my Daddy and said 'This is where I belong. We don't need to visit anywhere else.' And he looked at me like, 'My child with no life experience has visited ONE college..., ' but I said 'I know this, trust me. I feel it - this is where I belong.' I think a lot of people had this experience.

Deadra Jefferson

I attended an African American high school in Atlanta. I did not go to school with Caucasians the entire time I attended school, from kindergarten until 12th grade, so when I arrived at Converse this was like a different universe for me, to be quite candid. Talk about transforming my mind and making me think differently — one of the things I learned at Converse is to be fearless and to be confident. I felt like I could compete with anyone, and I did compete with anyone.

Phyllis Harris

Mentorship Experiences and Advice

I was Converse’s first black faculty member...The students who were here in the early and mid ’70s were exceptional students. It was a two-way mentorship. I felt I served as a mentor to students - not only black students but all students - and I feel students helped me in my growth process. It was a very exciting time.

Kay Woodward

I created a Board of Advisors. This is a group of individuals I trust and love...who know my character...It took me years to assemble my personal board of advisors, and they help me when I make life decisions about my career or something personal. I think having a mentor and mentee relationship is so important.

Candy Moore

Eleanor Roosevelt said ‘Learn from the mistakes of others. You can never live long enough to make them all yourself.’ It is essential to have a mentor. Someone who has already traveled your road and made the mistakes. As children of the ’60s, our mothers taught us that you become better from a thing, not bitter...Even though you experience hard things you know you come out of it for the better. We all need a confessor who hears without judgment who can encourage us to know that we will overcome the rough patches of the journey. Nothing in life worth having is ever going to be easy.

Deadra Jefferson

Pivotal Moments When Barriers Were Broken

I started in 1996 and that was the year that we had 33 black female students. It was the largest in the College’s history...but by the end of that first year, 15 were gone... One of my good friends was from the inner city of Detroit and that was a culture shock to come to Spartanburg, SC... There were some racial tensions that occurred during that time, and I think now we’re a lot more culturally sensitive.

Joy Stoney

In the 1980s we were still seeing some of the last public elements of segregation. I remember one of the students...came to us and said ‘I’m getting married and I want you to come to my wedding, but you can’t come to the reception because it is at a whites only country club...I remember us looking at one another and telling her...“We just don’t feel comfortable with that.”

Jayne Reuben

In 1995, when I came to Converse it was at the time when the first female was trying to be accepted into The Citadel...In response to this challenging time, Converse began the South Carolina Institute of Leadership for Women (SCIL); a military leadership program for women. (The issue) wasn’t about race but it was about women and the rights of women...That stood out to me during my years here.

Dawn Deck

Pivotal Moments (cont.)

To me the biggest breakdown of the racial barrier was when we came back to school in 1980 and... there were 21-22 black women in the incoming class, that’s when I felt like things had really changed... In reflection, and I know the College has changed significantly in this regard, in many respects perhaps the infrastructure was not in place because we lost quite a few of those women... If I could go back in time, there were women that I wish we had helped a bit more.

Phyllis Harris



Creating Unity in Our Communities

Converse was a wonderfully secure environment in which to grow and to become. People always ask me what it’s like to be a black judge and I say maybe the better question is what is it like being a female judge, because being a woman always matters, no matter what environment you are in. As women, we have to remember the importance of complimenting one another, supporting one another, how to push one another - we should always know the importance of standing on one another’s shoulders.

Deadra Jefferson

I pledged the citywide chapter of Delta Sigma Theta at Converse with women from Wofford and Limestone and USC Spartanburg. Of course, we don’t have these citywide chapters anymore, but at the end of the day it was about how to have connectivity as a family, and for me personally it meant a lot to have that experience. Everything is about culture and about feeling accepted.

Phyllis Harris

We shouldn’t campaign so much on social media about our grievances. Instead, go to individuals and have a conversation to confront issues head on. We must intentionally reach beyond what we know to be comfortable and learn something different about others who don’t look like us.

Dawn Deck



Hopes for Converse's Future and for Our Students

My hope for Converse is that it is a thriving institution with wonderful women and is exclusively a women's college 100 years from now. Being on the Board has helped me to gain a better appreciation for this college community and to see what it really takes to make this the special place that it is. It takes all of us having a love for the College, and it is wonderful to see so many women come back. But we not only have to come back, we also have to give back.

Phyllis Harris

I love looking in the audience and seeing that Converse women do not all look alike, sound alike, care about the same things, believe the same things, or want the same things. My hope is that what binds us and distinguishes us is that we share a commitment to excellence and we will all be willing to speak up when something wrong or inappropriate is going on, even when doing so is not comfortable.

Stinson Ferguson

My hope for Converse is that it continues to be a college that cares about her students. My mother was a widow and she passed away my sophomore year. The faculty here took care of me... Students, you are going to have adversity and you may not come here under the best circumstances, but what you leave with is what you take with you. Converse will be here for you and we want you to be here for Converse.

Jayne Reuben

The one thing I regret is taking for granted the relationships I formed at Converse, believing they were going to last forever. You have to put forth effort to maintain relationships...as my pastor says, relationships are the currency of Heaven. Stay in touch with each other and support each other.

Joy Stoney

From a faculty perspective, it is my wish for Converse to be much more diverse in terms of faculty representation....I encourage Converse to be very intentional about diversity of faculty and staff, and I encourage quality additions of faculty who are diverse.

Kay Woodward

I ask that we keep the momentum going that we have here today...Converse molded me and provided my foundation from a professional perspective...Please consider that in your journey in being reconnected to Converse.

Candy Moore

In Closing

When I talked to these women about their Converse experience, not all of their stories were positive...but they came back and they led and they committed themselves to making things better when it would have been easy to walk away. We are all striving for this common vision that you expressed, and that means having the hard conversations.

President Newkirk

Reflections After the Event

The turnout for the event was not purely other women of color - not even purely other women. The Chamber President was there. President Newkirk's husband was there. Trustees were there. Professors were there. People I served with on the Alumnae Board were there. Current students were there. People of all shades, ages, and styles were present and engaged. The energy was fantastic. This is a community-wide celebration, not just a celebration for women of color.

Stinson Ferguson



One Converse family had five alumnae members present for the February event! From left: **Patricia Perry Beason '79**, **Wanda McDowell Moore '91**, **Wilesa Davis Wright '01**, **Sandra Beason Watson '79**, **Dawn Davis Deck '99**

The Ride of the Valkyries

The Evolution of Athletics and Sports at Converse College

By
Joe P. Dunn
Charles A. Dana
Professor of History and Politics

Margaret S. Moore
Associate Professor of
Physical Education

The saga of women's athletics at Converse and in the nation is infused with strong notions about women's physical nature, gender roles, and prejudices against "wrong" or "unnatural" feminine behavior. Women in northeastern and midwestern institutions were saddled with these biases in the nineteenth century, and the prejudices were even more prominent in the south, where notions about race and class shaped cultural norms heavily.

When Converse College was founded in 1889, English Victorian and Edwardian views about physical activity still lingered. Athletic uniforms assured that women conformed to a strict standard of femininity. In croquet, southern belles appeared neat and tidy in their hooped skirts and layers of petticoats. Tennis was popular despite some views that it was "unfeminine" to run, but the corset, starched petticoat and skirt, heavily buttoned blouse,

silver-buckled belt, and sneakers with large silk bows made running nearly impossible. In these costumes, women maintained strict cultural standards of feminine decorum. Those who styled themselves differently risked being labeled inappropriate, unwomanly, or tomboyish.

The emerging discipline of women's physical education, led by teachers trained in the northeast, continued to place a high premium on femininity and ladylike qualities but emphasized the importance of physical health to a woman's well-being. The 1897-98 Converse College Catalogue expressed the Greek conception: "A perfectly sound mind cannot exist in an unsound body, neither can the soul perform its best work when hampered by an unhealthy body." To enhance students' well-being, the Department of Expression and Physical Culture offered calisthenics, Swedish gymnastics, hygiene, and a variety of

sports activities. In 1894 the college laid out outdoor tennis courts, constructed a two-lane bowling alley, and built a gym on the first two floors of Dexter Hall, a new campus dormitory.

Although some questioned women playing "men's games," more competitive sports soon emerged on women's college campuses. Initially, baseball was the most popular sport, for it could be played in seclusion in remote areas of campus. But it was basketball that soon became the most popular sport at Converse and at other women's colleges. The game was adapted for women by Smith College physical educator Senda Berenson to limit players' movements, decrease aggression, and emphasize ladylike poise.

Converse adopted Berenson's version of basketball. Pictures of the campus teams appear in college yearbooks starting in 1899. Dexter Gymnasium

was divided into three sections, and games revolved around poles on the court that held up the ceiling. The first competitive basketball teams, the Atalanta Club, named for the Greek mythological female warrior and athlete, and the Hyppolita Club, for the Amazonian queen and daughter of Ares, Greek god of war, vied for a \$100 loving cup provided personally by the college president. In 1901 the Atalantas won the game 16-8, and in May 1902 the student literary publication Concept boasted that the Converse women were ready to play baseball against the local Wofford College men. "The time is not far distant when we shall be allowed to win the championship of the State in baseball and basketball," it proclaimed.

As competition evolved, so did athletic attire, although Converse uniforms did not change as rapidly as they did at northern women's colleges. In the

1899 yearbook, students on the first basketball team appear dressed in dark, heavy outfits with long skirts and long-sleeved, loose blouses with sailor-style collars and the letters "CC." Although basketball and baseball remained the prime sports, tennis and golf were becoming popular as well. Tennis outfits consisted of long skirts over full petticoats; white, long-sleeved blouses; a bow tie or long, thin tie; and a hat. By 1903, uniform hems rose to mid-calf, though dark stockings still covered the legs.

Sports had become such an integral part of campus life in the first decade of the twentieth century that the Converse College Athletic Association (CCAA) emerged to promote spirit, sportsmanship, and team play among members of the student body. The CCAA began to award a "C" letter to basketball players and those who won specific events at Field Day.

“Tennis outfits consisted of long skirts over full petticoats; white, long-sleeved blouses; a bow tie or long, thin tie; and a hat.”

The criteria for this distinction became increasingly stringent: women earned their letter by accruing points awarded for athletic prowess, but also for other feminine qualities and for personal health. By 1926, organized sports, including basketball, baseball, field hockey, archery, track, swimming, and tennis had replaced more casual games. Indeed, no woman could consider her college career complete “unless she has been a member of the rowing club, hockey team, or some of the numerous others that exist,” Concept claimed, and she would “sacrifice almost anything for her athletics.”

Fashion also helped encourage women’s participation in sports. The “Gibson Girl,” an athletic, voluptuous ideal created by illustrator Charles Dana Gibson, was the upper-class standard of feminine beauty at the turn of the century. In Spartanburg, wrote historian Howard L. Preston, “the ‘Gibson Girl’ and the ‘Converse Girl’ were interchangeable.” Furthermore, images of fashionable young women engaging in sport helped to encourage and motivate students “who had previously been given every reason to believe that athletic competition was too strenuous and physically taxing for them.” As the century wore on, the Gibson “updo” hairstyle disappeared, and gym uniforms transformed. Converse adopted a more liberal style of

shorter dresses and hairstyles through the 1920s, but only gradually did students begin to wear shorts. Although women at state institutions in North Carolina changed their uniforms in the 1930s, pictures of Converse athletes in shorts do not appear until the 1950s.

The emphasis on women’s poise and personal health continued throughout the twentieth century. Carolyn Duer Pennell, class of 1950, explained that in her day, one requirement for earning a letter was to quit smoking for six weeks. Mrs. Pennell remembered that she “always fulfilled the other requirements” but “just could not give up the smoking.” She never achieved the coveted “Block C” award and admitted that “at times” her teams “weren’t very good,” but Pennell also recalled having lots of fun and laughing a lot.

Until the 1960s, Converse followed the philosophy of physical educator Helen N. Smith, who in a 1931 article titled “Evils of Sports for Women,” warned against the commercialization of sport. She advocated playing for enjoyment with the “spirit of play and fellowship” rather than intercollegiate competition and star athletes. Physical education and athletic competition were intended for exercise, health, and general wellbeing, and all students, not just selected athletes, participated. In pursuit of healthy living, gardening was

included in the physical education curriculum from 1934 into the 1950s. Activity courses stressed grace, poise, body strength, and habits of lifelong recreation. From the late 1940s until the 1960s, Converse students participated in Play Days held at nearby colleges, particularly sister women’s college Winthrop. In the 1960s Converse shifted to intercollegiate athletics.

The change was modest. In 1973, Converse’s only sports teams were tennis and field hockey, both in transition from club activity to intercollegiate competition. That year, twenty-three-year-old Margaret Sakowski, an undergraduate athlete at women’s institution Queens College with a master’s degree in physical education from the University of Georgia, arrived as instructor and coach. In addition to teaching a full academic load of activity courses, Sakowski inherited the tennis and field hockey teams.

In the next few years, she added basketball and volleyball as intercollegiate teams. Competition was minimal at first. The Converse “All-Stars”—a play on the Converse shoe company’s famous “Chuck Taylor All-Stars” sneakers—played private high school teams and a few colleges. Recruiting players was a challenge since only two schools in South Carolina played field hockey, and many of the original basketball players came from church leagues.

The biggest change in Converse athletics came in 1985 when the Board of Trustees inaugurated athletic scholarships. Converse sports teams for the first time became competitive and the cross country, tennis, and basketball teams all gained national achievement in the late 1980s and early 1990s. But things were not all positive. Returning from a pre-season game in





October 1987, the basketball team bus was run over by a trailer truck that resulted in the deaths of two players and the driver; four others sustained permanent lifetime injuries and the rest were all hospitalized. The team continued the season with walk-on players that included two future Miss America finalists.

Converse joined the NCAA in 1993. But at the end of its inaugural year in its new conference, the Board of Trustees publicly announced the elimination of all Converse athletics programs as part of an emergency deficit reduction measure. All but six of the 39 scholarship athletes stayed

at the college with their scholarships honored, but their athletic careers ended. Within six months, the board decided to revive the athletic program, but the level of competition and institutional affiliation had to be determined. Converse opted for Division II, with which most co-educational schools in the Carolinas affiliated, even though the institution would be the only women's college in the nation at that level. Reapplication to the NCAA, acceptance by a new conference, upgrading facilities, building new teams with coaches and players, and launching the new Valkyries mascot were accomplished by 2007.

Women's colleges played a key role in the early development of women's physical activity and athletics, but the small number of these institutions that exist today have low athletic profiles. As one of the smallest colleges in the country to maintain a robust women's sports program, Converse demonstrates that athletics are as central to its future as it has been to its past.

» This is an excerpt from the article published in *Carologue*, a publication of the South Carolina Historical Society.

VIEW THE FULL ARTICLE ONLINE:
www.converse.edu/RideOfTheValkyries

SAVE THE DATE
**REUNION
WEEKEND**



MAY 31st
JUNE 2nd
2019

**Registration Opens
Dec 1st**

**Pack your bags and enjoy Converse's
"stay-on-campus" summertime
reunion!**

**Every alumna is welcome! We will induct
the Class of 1969 into our Golden Club
and honor classes ending in '4,'9 and
the Class of 2018.**



11.08.18
SAVE THE DATE

**3RD ANNUAL
DAY OF
GIVING**

Another Banner Year for Our Valkyries & A Fond Farewell to Joy Couch



▲ Assistant Athletic Director **Jodi Strehl** and Athletic Director **Joy Couch** present the 2018 Weisiger Cup to tennis team member **Kaitlin Knight '18**, who holds the team record with 52 victories during her tenure as a Valkyrie.

#HistoryStartsHere. That's a hashtag from an Instagram feed loaded with pictures and a couple of TV news clips showcasing one of the newest sports to tumble out of Converse's high-flying Athletics Department: the Acrobatics & Tumbling team.

As their 1,500 followers know them, converse_acrotumb is somersaulting into the history books as Converse's 13th sports team, already boasting 36 student-athletes from 12 states as far-flung as California, Connecticut, Maine and Illinois.

"Athletics is pretty much known as the front porch of an institution, and it gives a view of what's inside," says Joy Couch, who served as Athletic Director until moving to Spartanburg

Day School this summer. She started in 2007, when just 37 student athletes played five sports. Today, she is amazed by "all we have accomplished at Converse College. I truly love this place and the wonderful students, coaches, and colleagues who have become my family here."

That family now embraces a record 240 scholarship athletes from 21 states and several countries. Softball hit in Spring 2015, field hockey in Fall 2017. New sports create more recruiting opportunities for Converse coaches, while other marquee attractions include the \$3.3 million, state-

than ever before," Couch says, "and it only makes sense that if you have the opportunity to come to get a full, complete experience and education, that you would want to come to a place where you can compete in what you're passionate about."

That's what drew Corinne Flanary, who transferred from Sweet Briar to saddle up her passion. "I knew I had to keep riding in college," the 21-year-old senior philosophy major says. "I think it's great that we have an Equestrian team because so few schools do that are not club teams, and with our small size, it makes us unique." Better yet,

"There are more girls competing in high school sports now than ever before..."

of-the-art Marsha H. Gibbs Field House and Converse's distinctive place in collegiate athletics—the only women's college in the nation competing in the NCAA's Division II.

"We know that there are more girls competing in high school sports now

Valkyries aren't stabled alongside nettlesome colts. "We don't have to share our facilities with anybody," Couch says. "We're the top bill. Most other programs that are co-ed, the guys get the premier time."

In the Field House's fully outfitted



weight room, everything stays calibrated for women. Lacrosse and soccer players take Fulp Field without waiting for the men's team. Swimmers don't have to splash alongside guys, and there are no full-court blocks from male athletes on the basketball court.

Meanwhile, the student-athlete population accounts for around 30 percent of the total enrollment. In Fall 2017, Converse welcomed 275 athletes. "Maintaining the balance is important to the culture of Converse," Couch says, "because Converse is such a tight-knit community." As any tumbler knows, balance is fundamental to flying. Or as WYFF-TV reported in a March piece as much about the Acro and Tumbling team as it is about Converse's Athletics full Department: "The program is already reaching new heights."

We wish you well, Joy Couch, as you fly on to more great things in life!



Follow the Valkyries

www.govalkyries.com



▲ Converse President, **Krista Newkirk**; University Center of Greenville CEO and President, **David Taylor**; Converse Dean of Education and Graduate Studies, **Lienne Medford**; and Converse Provost, **Jeff Barker** celebrate Converse's new presence at the University Center.

Converse Degree Programs Now Offered in Greenville

A new partnership with the University Center of Greenville, Inc. (UCG) enables Converse to offer degree programs at the University Center campus in downtown Greenville.

Converse began offering the co-educational Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) in Early Childhood Education at UCG this summer, and will begin offering the Master of Marriage and Family Therapy (MMFT) in summer 2019. The MAT in Middle Level and



▲ Converse's Director of Post Traditional Admission, **Kimberly Newton-Burgess**, meets prospective students at the University Center.

MAT in Secondary Education will follow, and other programs are anticipated in the future.

"Our new presence in Greenville will provide convenient access to students in this area and will help fill workforce development needs across the Upstate," said President Krista Newkirk. "Opening with our MAT and our MMFT, which are high-demand programs, creates the perfect launch pad for our continued growth."

The University Center is a higher education collaborative of eight leading, accredited and highly ranked South Carolina universities and colleges, seeking to advance access and attainment of higher education degrees to benefit citizens and the economic community. Members include Anderson University, Bob Jones University, Clemson University, Furman University, Greenville Technical College, the University of South



Carolina, and the University of South Carolina Upstate.

Converse's expansion to UCG is supported by a gift commitment from the Seymour Foundation, and is being led by Dr. Lienne Medford, Dean of Education and Graduate Studies at Converse.

"Converse is known for its hands-on, student-centered approach and our faculty and staff look forward to bringing our distinctive brand of personal advising, coaching, and assistance in achieving life and career goals to students at UCG," Medford said.

The MAT serves college graduates seeking a career in teaching, and will help address K-12 teacher shortages at the state and national levels. Medford notes that it is ideal for people changing careers or returning to the workforce after a break, such as raising children. "Providing this population with a convenient, face-to-face program helps them successfully transition into teaching," she said.

The MMFT program trains clinically skilled and culturally competent systemic marriage and family therapists who can practice effectively and ethically in a wide variety of settings. It is the only program in South Carolina accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education.

» LEARN MORE
www.greenville.org

New Dean Puts Converse on the Move

With an eye towards growth and positive impact on K-12 education across South Carolina and beyond, Converse's new Dean of Education and Graduate Studies brings a wealth of experience and \$717,000 in National Science Foundation (NSF) grant funds to support Converse students. Dr. Lienne Medford joined Converse last summer from Clemson University, where she served as Associate Dean of the Graduate School and taught for sixteen years.

Dr. Medford was named Outstanding Professor for 2016-2017 by the National Association of Professors of Middle Level Education and has been awarded more than \$2 million in grants from the NSF. She currently serves as national accreditation coordinator for the Association for Middle Level Education and as a member of the Board of Visitors for the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP).

Medford's NSF funding via the Noyce Teacher Scholarship program will provide financial and professional development support for students studying STEM fields who plan to teach following graduation. In exchange for their commitment to teach for two years in a South Carolina middle or secondary math or science classroom, Noyce Scholars receive a \$13,000 scholarship, a year-long mentorship from a public school teacher in their content area, special workshops designed for STEM candidates, and opportunities to apply for travel funding to STEM conferences



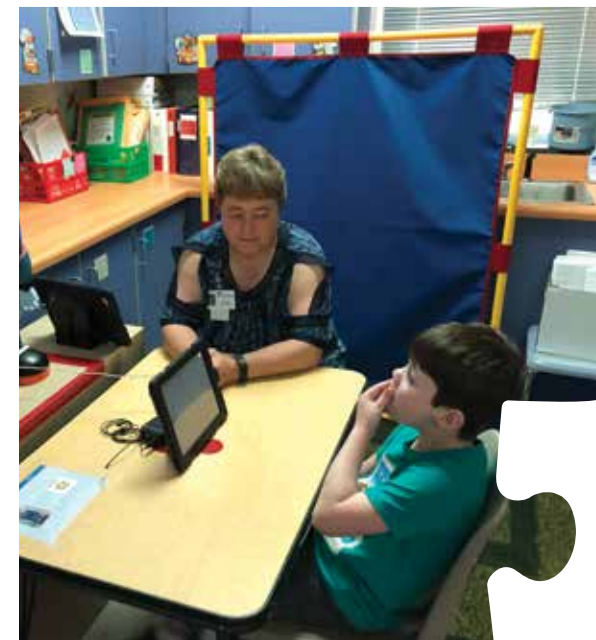
and for professional development funds for their classroom.

The first cohort of Converse Noyce Scholars will begin this fall. Current rising juniors and seniors and MAT students are eligible, as well as qualifying transfer students and new MAT applicants.

» LEARN MORE
www.converse.edu/NoyceScholars



Pioneering Autism Coursework for South Carolina



The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention announced in April that one in 59 American children has been diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) – a 15% increase from two years ago and a 150% increase since 2000.

Despite these staggering statistics and heightened public awareness, few teacher education programs nationwide provide specialized instruction in ASD. Converse has responded by creating South Carolina's first course sequence to equip educators to serve this population. Designed by Converse alumna Elena Ghionis, Lead Autism Specialist with the McCarthy Teszler School in Spartanburg School District 7, the graduate level, five-course certificate program was completed by the College's first cohort of 35 educators this spring.

The program participants serve in a variety of K-12 school positions, ranging from mainstream and special education classroom teachers to counselors, and from speech therapists to a school nurse. All encounter and support students on the Autism Spectrum regularly, but none have benefited from in-depth training on how to best support this population until now.

"Our program provides tools that help unlock students' full potential, with the goal of helping these students reach their dreams and become successful members of our society," said Ghionis, who was recognized by the SC Autism Society as Autism Specialist of the Year in 2015.

Participant Kylie McKinney says the courses enabled her to serve not only students, but also their families and

other educators who support them, much more effectively: "More and more educators are teaching children on the Autism Spectrum. My role as an Autism Specialist for Spartanburg County public schools requires that I collaborate with many other educators, staff members, families, and most importantly, students. Essentially, that means these courses have a positive impact that is tenfold. The magnitude of this program could be a game changer in the lives of students with ASD."

Converse offers one of the most comprehensive ranges of special education degrees in the state, and aims to broaden its ASD instruction to serve teachers beyond the Upstate region in the near future.

» LEARN MORE www.converse.edu/ASD

A Healthy Outlook on New Degree Programs

▲ 2018 healthcare administration degree graduates celebrate commencement with program co-directors Dr. David Church and Dr. Woody Hughes.

Holly Ceremuga '18 once thought about becoming a doctor or nurse. After all, her mom, Sandi, is a registered nurse who works as an administrator for a healthcare provider. A couple of years ago, Holly learned something about herself—and discovered Converse's new degree program in the business of medicine.

"I took a biology course and thought, nope, this is not for me," the 23-year-old says. "I decided to go into the business side so I could still be in healthcare."

Today, she works for physicians' offices at Mary Black Health System. Just two years prior, she transferred from Clemson after learning about Converse's new program in Healthcare Administration. She graduated in May among the College's first students to earn the degree.

"Seven young women were brave founding sisters of this new degree at Converse," says Lori Winkles, Vice President of Professional Services at Spartanburg Regional Healthcare System and a professor in the program. "We couldn't be more thrilled that they took a chance."

Dr. Woody Hughes, Associate Professor of Economics at Converse and the program's co-director, is equally as happy, especially since most of the graduates are already employed in their field. And thanks to the program's established success at the undergraduate level, Converse recently received accreditor approval to add a master's level program in healthcare management, which will open this fall. Only two other institutions in the state offer similar programs: the Medical University of South Carolina and University of South Carolina.

Hughes attributes the undergraduates' success to their immersion in business courses coupled with "very applied or specific informational and skill sets that deal directly with the healthcare industry. For example, one of the first courses is healthcare communications – basically how to communicate with patients and their families."

That's an increasingly crucial component of healthcare today, notes Dr. David Church, who is Spartanburg Regional's Vice President for Oncology and Support Services and co-directs the program with Hughes. "We talk a great deal through the various classes about the difficulty of balancing the bottom line with compassionate, quality care."

Winkles has been impressed by Converse students in the program. "They are a very compassionate group of young women who also have strong business sense. They seem to understand that you have to have a balance between providing compassionate

care and managing a business."

The feeling from students is mutual. "The professors have so much experience that they were willing to share with us, and they would relate everything we were learning in class back to something we would be dealing with when we got out to do our job," Ceremuga says.

Those jobs are plentiful—and lucrative. The US Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that an administrator's average annual compensation tops \$96,000, and forecasts some 2.4 million new healthcare jobs by 2026.

"Converse saw the need," Church says, "and Converse is willing to adapt and be innovative."

» LEARN MORE
www.converse.edu/Healthcare
www.converse.edu/MIM



▲ Rising seniors **Jennifer Spires** and **Alaina Kennedy** (left and center) are clinical research interns with Gibbs Cancer Center, and 2018 graduate **Krislyn Moore** (right) is an intern in Spartanburg Regional Hospital's executive offices.

THE ART OF TEACHING THE WRIGHT STUFF

Some say teaching is an art. A handful of Converse arts professors say teaching art comes naturally to artists, anyway. So they created—then won—one of Converse’s highly competitive Creativity, Community, and Cultural Enrichment grants for an outreach program that lets Converse arts students teach underserved elementary schoolchildren.

“As I was looking at area schools to begin conversations about collaborative experiences for Converse music students, the principal at Mary H. Wright Elementary School happened to be looking for the same things,” says Dr. Susie Lalama, Assistant Professor of Music Education in the Petrie School of Music.

Indeed, he was. “The partnership is a perfect match,” says Dr. Marc Zachary, the school’s principal.

The grant brought Converse art, theatre, and music students to the Spartanburg District 7 elementary school to facilitate weekly lessons throughout the spring, serving about 150 first- through fifth-graders in the Boys & Girls Club after-school program there. The school is designated as Title I Priority because its students come from low-income families.

Arts at Work: A Community Outreach Project, as the Converse C3 grant is known, provided \$3,000 for art, music, theatre, and dance supplies that were incorporated into the lessons. The Converse students used children’s literature as inspiration, turning to a variety of authors and artists as subjects during their half-hour sessions that ran from 2:30 to 6 p.m.

“Principal Zachary understands how stimulating the developing brains of children with music and the arts can

help them develop cognitive, social, and emotional skills,” Lalama says. The project also benefits students at both schools with transferable problem-solving strategies that will serve them throughout life. Converse students kept portfolios of lesson plans and of brainstorming notes from meetings with faculty.

“Our 12 pre-service clinical art teachers have loved working with Mary H. Wright students and getting their feet wet with planning, motivating, and instructing during the after-school period, which is a bit different from the regular classroom,” says Dr.

Susanne Gunter, Chair of the Department of Art and Design.

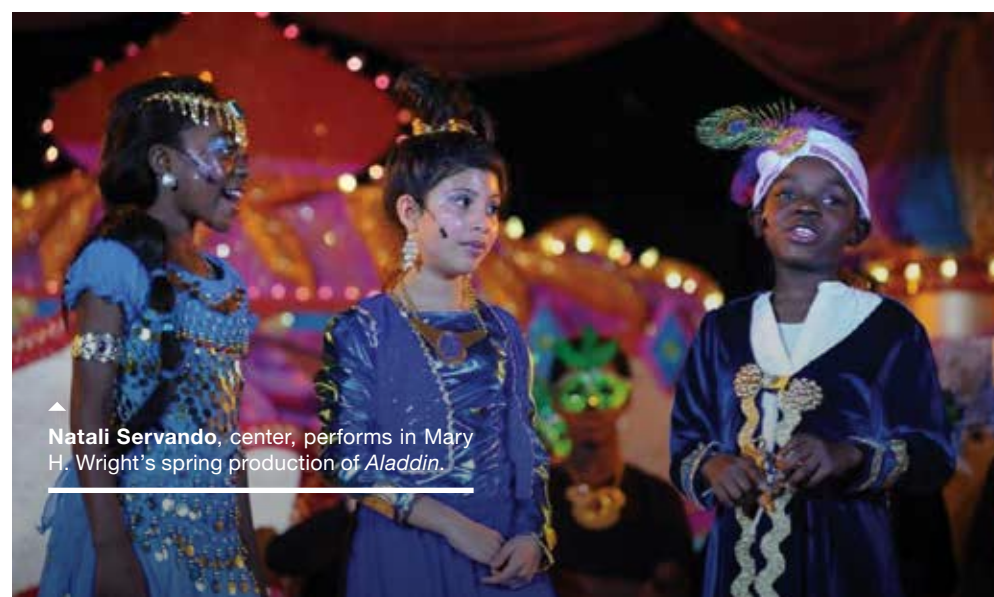
The feeling is mutual. “You should see the faces of our kids when Converse students come to campus,” says Zachary. “It’s exciting to see the impact this is making in the lives of our children.”

Natali Servando is a fifth-grader who, as the program was getting underway in February, was looking forward to the theatre sessions that would begin in April. “It’s really fun to get to be in musicals at Mary H. Wright and to be involved in the arts,” she says. “I get



to express myself in different ways, like body motions and facial expressions. I had been in little bitty plays at church, but our plays at Mary H. Wright give us more people to perform in front of and to show people what we can do.”

The project placed an intentional focus on impacting the children. “Thinking first of the needs of the students at Mary H. Wright and then providing Converse students opportunities to share their knowledge and arts education with others can invoke positive changes for people in our community,” says Lalama.



▲ Natali Servando, center, performs in Mary H. Wright's spring production of *Aladdin*.

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THE JOURNEY STARTS HERE!

The journey to find the right college begins with a visit to Converse College. Introduce a young woman to your alma mater so she can experience why this could be her perfect fit!

September Open House - September 22
October Open House - October 20
Petrie School of Music Preview - October 27
Performing and Visual Arts Audition - November 16

For details and registration, visit
www.Converse.edu/PreviewDays

To refer a student, visit
www.Converse.edu/Refer

CONVERSE



“I want young girls to know that yes, you can be a research scientist and be a woman. Yes, you can study a STEM field and it’s cool to study a STEM field.”

Tooting Our Own Horn

Understanding Gillian Horn’s work can be a challenge. Understanding Gillian’s success is much easier. Since she was a toddler she knew she wanted to be a scientist, and Converse College provided just the right chemistry for her to become an award-winning researcher.

“Since the third grade, I’ve said I want to be a biochemist,” says the Nisbet Honors Program student. “I’m one of those crazy science people, but I feel like Converse has allowed me to secure that goal and dream I’ve had since I was little.”

Thanks to the support of Converse faculty mentors, the Raleigh, NC,

native has garnered state and national recognition in the form of prestigious awards during her time at Converse.

In April, she presented a talk during the South Carolina Academy of Science’s 91st annual meeting. The Academy presented her with both the Dwight Camper Outstanding Undergraduate Research Award, its highest honor for undergraduate research, and the Top Outstanding Female Scientist Award.

Just two weeks prior, she received word from the Barry Goldwater Scholarship competition that she was awarded an honorable mention from a nationwide field of 1,280 applicants.

The Goldwater is one of the nation’s most coveted scholarships for sophomores and juniors in the natural sciences, mathematics and engineering; and Gillian is Converse’s third recipient within the last decade.

“Converse is competing on a national level. South Carolina’s other Goldwater honorees are from large research universities,” says Dr. Will Case, Gillian’s research mentor at Converse. “Although we are small, our students stand out among their peers from larger institutions. Gillian has proven that she is a shining star in the research laboratory, and I look forward to seeing what she will accomplish in the future.”

As for her perspective, Gillian says she not only feels Converse’s influence, she also looks forward to influencing the next generation of women interested in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) fields. “I want young girls to know that yes, you can be a research scientist and be a woman. Yes, you can study a STEM field and it’s cool to study a STEM field.”

She’s definitely at a gender disadvantage. Women comprise slightly more than half of the nation’s college educated workforce, but only a quarter of college-trained STEM workers, according to the US Commerce Department.

But at Converse, being a woman brings every advantage. More than 90 percent of natural sciences majors complete a capstone research project and presentation before graduation. Gillian’s research is guided by Dr. Case with funding from the National Institutes of Health (grant P20GM103499 – SC INBRE from National Institute of General Medical Sciences). They explore the capability of sensors to detect small molecules implicated in disease states, in hopes of eventually designing a sensor template that could be used to detect a variety of diagnostic molecules.

“Being at Converse makes me believe I can achieve my goals,” Gillian says.

“Being at Converse makes me believe I can obtain my MD or PhD. Being at Converse makes me believe I can cure a disease, I can be a researcher, I can be a minority in the field of science.”

It is an environment she attributes to her success and hopes will empower the women who follow in her footsteps. “Everyone supports one another here. Faculty and staff push you. They expect a lot of you, but that’s great preparation for your field. They make you think. Sometimes, they make you cry. But you will love it here,” she says.

» MEET GILLIAN VIA A STUDENT SPOTLIGHT VIDEO
www.converse.edu/VideoGallery

Dr. Joe Dunn and Kaylee Boalt '14 present to 15 journalists from NATO member countries at the National Press Building in Washington, DC.

Altering the Course of History, One Conversation at a Time

By
Kaylee Boalt '14



Minister of France, Afghanistan War Specialist from Germany, and Icelandic Diplomat are a few of the titles I held as a Converse student delegate at International Model NATO conferences in Washington, DC. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is a political alliance of 29 countries that I knew nothing about when I arrived as a freshman at Converse in 2010. In student-led committees on nuclear power, emerging security challenges, and political diplomacy, I first began my career in international relations.

Flash-forward to seven years later, and I am sitting beside my Converse

itself. Here is what I tell them: “Prior to enrolling at Converse, I wanted to be an opera singer. My dream was to study classical music and pursue a career in performance—probably not what anyone reading this was expecting me to say. However, soon after my first semester of college began I joined the Converse Model Programs team, throwing myself into the study of international bodies like NATO and the League of Arab States, where I learned how to research, write, and speak publicly from perspectives very different than my small-town South Carolina worldview. Traveling to Boston and Washington, DC representing my

actually effect change. A few years later, I traveled to Saudi Arabia as part of an American delegation of upper-classmen, where I discussed current events with Saudi government employees, professionals, and students — a real life practicum of a simulation like Model NATO! Witnessing another country’s culture and politics firsthand, especially in a place so drastically different from the US, deepened my interest in foreign policy and people-to-people exchanges. It is why I moved to Washington, DC after graduation to start a job in international education first with the National Council on US-Arab Relations and

“In today’s political climate, rife with tension and partisanship, it is difficult to maintain a civilized conversation with people whose views significantly differ from your own.”

professor and mentor, Dr. Joe Dunn, in a small conference room in the National Press Building in Washington, DC. Crisp, white table tents bearing our names—so similar to those placards used in Model NATO—mark our places at the speakers’ table. Gazing at us expectantly are 15 journalists from NATO member states. They are visiting the US as part of a delegation sponsored by the US Department of State to learn more about American support for NATO. Dr. Dunn and I have been invited to discuss the importance of educating members of civil society on foreign policy and how the Model NATO simulation produces a greater understanding and support of NATO

college in national conferences, I won awards for my portrayal of diplomats from Oman, Iceland, Palestine, Germany, Morocco and France. The result was a fascination with international studies and a change in major from opera performance to a double major in music and politics.

“Through the experience of putting myself into the shoes of another and of intensively studying issues like defense, economics and social affairs, I learned why collaboration and compromise is so integral to the world of foreign affairs. Model simulations demonstrate how interactions on an individual level, though small-scale,

now in my present position as a program manager for DC-based non-profit the American Council of Young Political Leaders (ACYPL).”

This group of veteran journalists have begun to realize the worth of Model NATO, and consequently, the worth of educating young people on international relations. It is a realization that I wish more Americans cared about. In today’s political climate, rife with tension and partisanship, it is difficult to maintain a civilized conversation with people whose views significantly differ from your own. Participation in diplomatic simulations during my time at Converse taught me the worth of



considering all perspectives in an effort to be a compassionate and well-informed global citizen.

Being a global citizen is something I practice daily in my current job. Between 25-30 times a year, ACYPL sends delegations of American political leaders abroad to experience politics and culture in another country and also receives international delegations to the US for the same purpose. These exchange programs are largely funded by the US Department of State Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. Well-known alumni include over 40 current members of the US Congress, members of foreign parliaments, and two current Prime Ministers.

My role at ACYPL is to facilitate several

▲
Boalt and Dunn pose with international reporters following their briefing on Model NATO.

exchanges per year and to escort visiting international groups around the US. Oftentimes, my delegates have never been to the US before and on these occasions, I am viewed as an ambassador of our country. ACYPL has cultivated an alumni base of over 8,500 people across 128 countries in its 52-year history. Each exchange enables a growing number of Americans to form their own firsthand impressions of other countries and governments.

I believe it is our duty as global citizens to broaden our horizons, to consider

new points of view, and to impart whatever bits of knowledge, skill, and kindness we have to all of those we meet. For me, this began at Converse College as an 18-year-old young adult. I have ingrained this principle into my professional travels across the US and to Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Oman, the Philippines, Malaysia, Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam. And I carry it with me today in my work in our nation’s capital — a place that requires open-mindedness and empathy more than ever before.

In the world of international relations, all it takes is one conversation to alter the course of history. My effect on this global world is far from prominent, but it matters. Though your own may seem minuscule to you, I believe it matters, too.



Making Her Own Way

Stephanie Newton pronounces her temporary home “Mell-bun,” the same way Aussies refer to “Melbourne.” Do as the Romans do, right? Stephanie’s roamin’, all right—and has been since she left home in Birmingham, AL, at 18.

“I still pinch myself that I’m really doing this,” the 2008 Converse alumna says via Skype from Down Under, where she’d recently watched a koala cross the road.

She caught the travel bug at Converse. From a January Term in the Galapagos to solo trips in Africa and South and Central America, she has worked, among internships and jobs, as a zookeeper in Omaha, NE, and her hometown. At Walt Disney’s Animal Kingdom in Florida, she taught conservation. After four months at an organic farm in New Zealand, she soon moved to Australia.

So far, she has jumped out of an airplane, splashed with sea lions, and

once broke her arm looking for an endangered bird. The 32-year-old “bird nerd,” with a summa cum laude degree in Biology, was hiking alone in search of a kokako, found only in New Zealand. Within 10 minutes, she saw one. Then she wiped out crossing a stream.

“I figured out how to tie a sling with my jacket, hiked back up the trail, got in my car, and drove one-handed back to town.”

Stephanie continues exploring ways to make travel a science. “I have experience in zoology and nearly eight years in travel sales and planning. To be able to plan and lead worldwide excursions, particularly educational ventures, would be the ultimate goal.” She credits much of her resourcefulness to Converse, where she was a Community Adviser and vice president of the synchronized swimming club, among other roles.

“I really thrived at Converse. I was this

“I still pinch myself that I’m really doing this.”

Spotlight

scared high school kid that needed a place that would give me those opportunities to grow. If I had gone to a place with thousands of other people, I would have let myself fade into the background. Converse doesn't let you do that."

She also credits her parents, Patricia and Steven, who stayed in Birmingham through their 38 years of marriage.

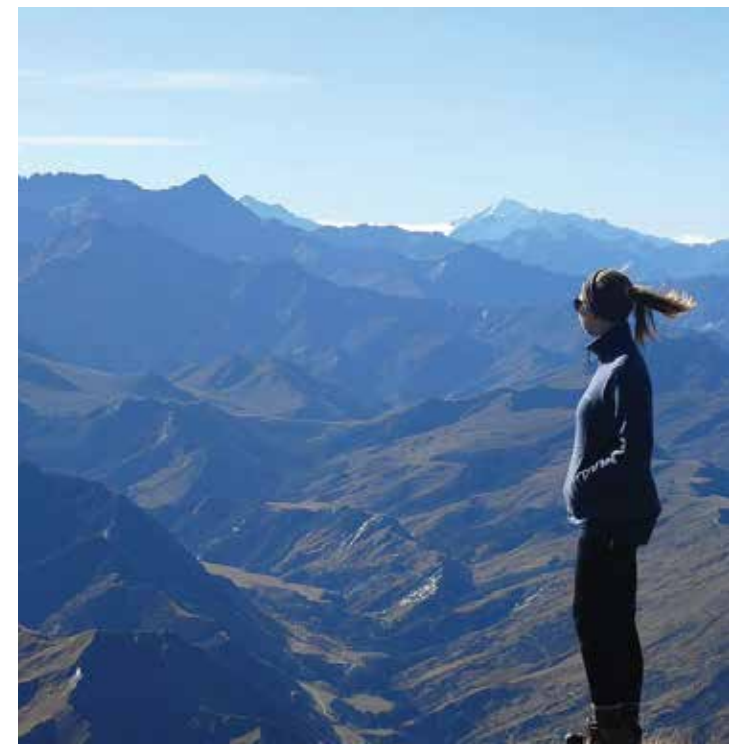
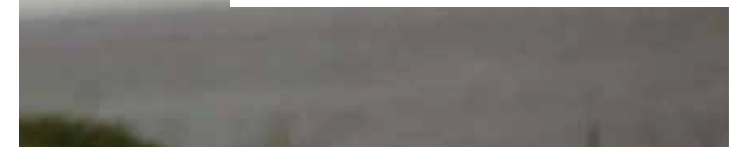
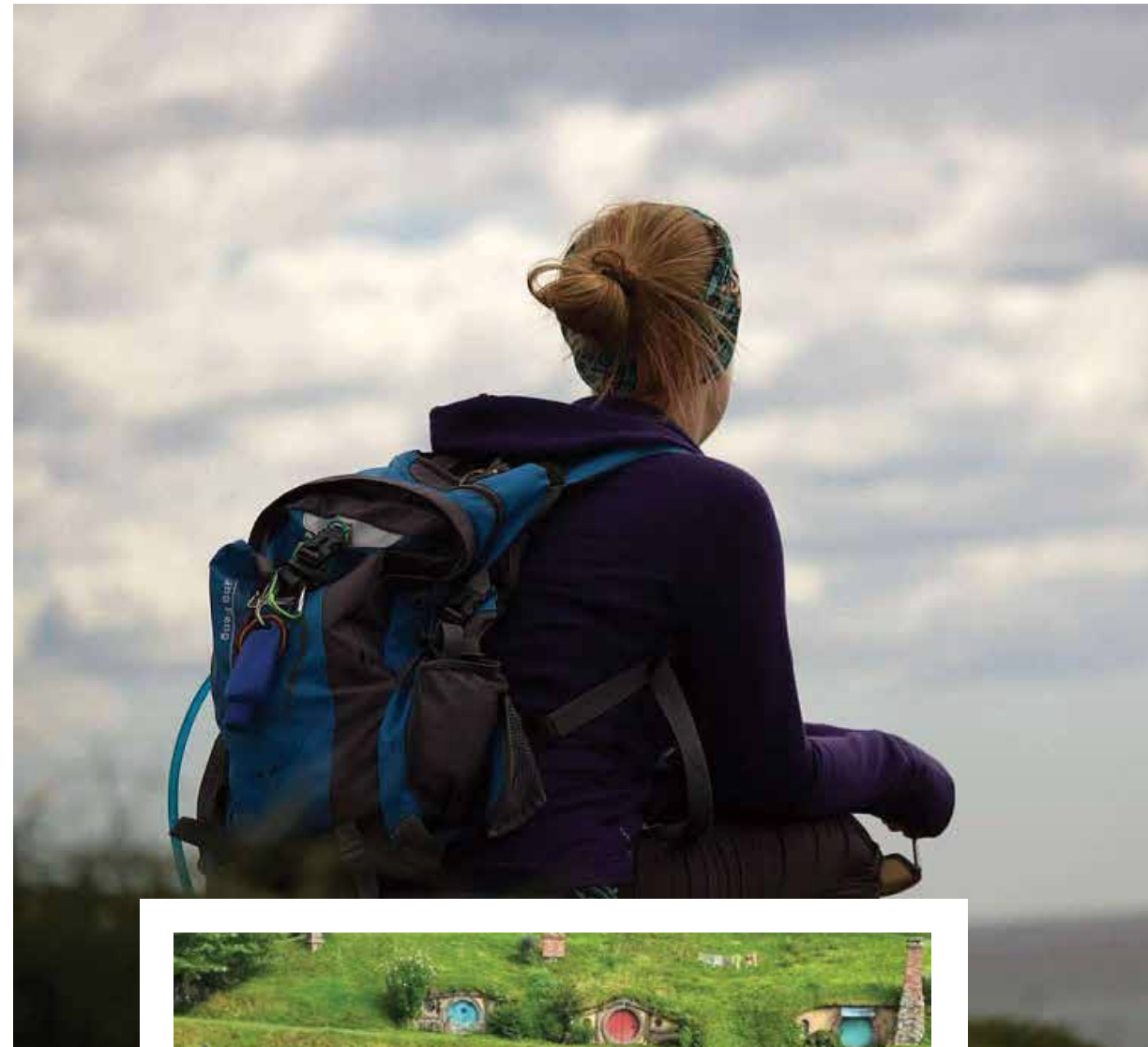
"Stephanie spent her childhood in her room reading until she started playing volleyball in high school," says Patricia, a church secretary and organist. "Converse being what Converse is, a woman's college, she just got all kinds of leadership roles, and she embraced it."

Biology Professor Dr. Edna Steele calls her onetime advisee "one of the most motivated students I know," a good-humored, intelligent woman who "never settles for a mediocre job." Next goal: Southeast Asia.

"Honestly, I love this lifestyle and want to stay on the move for the foreseeable future and I'm currently working on ways to do that."

She packs lightly, carrying optimism. "If it doesn't work out, cool: Change the dream. Don't stop dreaming. It's OK to move on to something else. It makes life a lot less scary if you give yourself backup plans, knowing everything will work out."

» FOLLOW STEPHANIE'S ADVENTURES
www.stephaniesandiego.wordpress.com
@ stephanie_sandiego



CHAMPIONS FOR CONVERSE

Alumnae involvement and support comes in many forms, spanning many generations. It is the lifeblood of Converse College, paving the way for students of today and tomorrow. Converse celebrates these inspiring women and the many others who proudly propel their *alma mater* forward!



Melissa Heatherly Brannen '03

Lexington, SC

- Supports the Converse Annual Fund every year
- Just began her second term on the Converse Alumnae Board
- Previously served as Alumnae Class Representative, Records and Recognition Committee Co-chair, and CARRE (Converse Alumnae Recruitment and Retention Effort) volunteer

“

As a first-generation college student, I credit Converse College for teaching me the importance of community and giving back. We as young alumnae can make an important impact on our *alma mater*.

My goal since graduation has been to offer an energetic and enthusiastic YES to every opportunity and need because this spirit builds Converse's success. It is both fun and meaningful to make a difference for my future Converse sisters.



Annemarie Sheehan Fortier '92

San Francisco, CA

- Hosted an alumnae event that drew every alumna in the San Francisco area, and is planning another for next year
- Consistently supports the Converse Annual Fund
- Touts the value of Converse to local high schools as a CARRE volunteer

“

My years at Converse encouraged me to pursue my independence. With travel abroad and tailored independent study, I gained confidence in myself that carried me around the world and through challenging professional environments.

Now living in California, it is difficult to return to South Carolina regularly. But we have managed to organize alumnae events here and I look forward to another West Coast get together next year.



Emmaday Collins Seymour '64*

Charlotte, NC

- Continues three generations of bold Converse women who propel our College forward
- Converse Annual Fund supporter
- Championed Seymour Foundation gift supporting Converse's University Center in Greenville expansion, online program development, and the integration of a data analytics component into our curriculum

“

Family foundations are a personal and deeply meaningful avenue for making a positive difference for organizations like Converse College. The Seymour/Collins/Holliday family has benefitted from Converse for three generations.

Providing our collective support through the Seymour Foundation enables us to make a broad impact that goes beyond annual support by expanding the college's capacity to create new programs and build new initiatives into the curriculum.

* Pictured with her daughter, Jane Seymour Copeland '92



Carolyn Duer Pennell '50*

Spartanburg, SC

- Faithful Converse Annual Fund supporter for over half a century
- Supports special opportunities like the Valkyries Athletics Fund and Friends of the Petrie School of Music, and is a Miss Gee Society member
- Co-hosts the annual Holiday Cheer alumnae event in Wilson Hall
- Loves being involved and has served in countless volunteer roles, from presidential inauguration chair to president of the Converse Alumnae Association to Class Fund Chair and more
- Instilled her love for Converse in her son, Rick Pennell, a member of the Converse Board of Trustees

“

I am proud to have known and worked alongside many people who have led my *alma mater* over the decades. Converse is truly my second home and I believe serving Converse has given me a much deeper appreciation for it.

I am very proud to see my son, Rick, serve on the Board of Trustees today. Our family is fully invested in the success of this great College! I encourage my fellow alumnae to say YES when Converse needs your support - both you and our College will be better for it!

* We are deeply saddened by the death of Carolyn Pennell just before the printing of this Converse magazine. She was thrilled and honored to be featured in this article, and will be greatly missed by her Converse family.

Learn more about how you can GIVE, GATHER, SERVE and CONNECT at

www.converse.edu/alumnae

Not Your Mother's Mickel Library

A multi-phased renovation funded by Cannon Charitable Interests and the Daniel-Mickel Foundation over the last two years has transformed Mickel Library into a modern, and very happening, campus hangout. Amidst the timeless collections, its hallowed halls now bustle with new life and activity.

The project's vision, informed by best practices in library design and student input, was established in 2016: A welcoming and technology-supported

environment that integrates contemporary collaborative learning spaces into all three floors. Three of the five project phases are now complete, with two additional space renovations upcoming, one to house the Nisbet Honors Program and the second for general student use.

Where massive shelves and heavy wooden tables once stood are now open, bright, technology-infused areas with flexible seating configurations,

flip-up desks, portable white boards, and computer workstations. New group friendly workrooms, a multimedia seminar classroom, and a presentation practice studio with audio/ video equipment and a green screen provide students with tools and spaces to research and develop ideas, and to prepare to present them with professionalism.

» WATCH THE NEW LIBRARY TOUR VIDEO
www.converse.edu/MickelTour



A Parting Gift that Opens the World



“As my legacy, I want to continue to support my students.”



Support the Bynum Study Abroad Endowment

Make your gift in Dr. Bynum's honor
www.converse.edu/Bynum

Dr. Brant Bynum has traveled to all manner of exotic ports of call, from North Africa to Europe, and throughout the Americas. Now he and Judy, his wife of 38 years, are planning a celebratory retirement cruise from Montreal to New York—while his love for travel stays close to home.

Before sailing away from Converse on August 31, 30 years to the day since he joined the faculty, he established the Brant and Judy Bynum Study Abroad Endowment Scholarship to

provide a permanent source of study-travel scholarships for Converse students.

“I believe study travel is one of the most important experiences a student can have,” says Bynum, who, in addition to his 30 years as Spanish professor is retiring as Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs and Director of Student Development and Success.

Bynum first traveled abroad as a

college student himself. Captivated during childhood by his grandparents' stories of traversing the globe, he cemented his marriage to Judy with a trip to the Caribbean. Travel has always been a priority in their marriage. In 2006, Bynum hosted a Converse alumnae trip to Greece, and in 2014 he co-hosted a student trip to Argentina.

“Travel opens the world,” Bynum says, explaining his decision to support this aspect of the college experience. “It

is a priceless, life-changing experience that broadens your view of the world and of your place within it in a way that eclipses any other educational experience.”

Scholarships from Bynum's fund will begin making travel possible for Converse students this coming academic year. Additionally, Bynum has named Converse as beneficiary of a life insurance policy that, upon his passing, will significantly boost its impact in perpetuity. While looking

forward to his own future trips to Italy, Portugal and the Canary Islands, Bynum contributes each month to this policy, making his Converse gift tax-deductible. “It's an easy and mutually-beneficial process,” he says.

“We are thankful for generous donors like Brant who understand that endowed gifts create a permanent and transformational impact for students,” says Krista Bofill, Vice President of Institutional Advancement. “Many Converse students need support in

order to take advantage of travel opportunities. Significantly expanding our student travel resources is a priority.”

Bynum sees his endowment as an opportunity to show other Converse donors the gift of giving. “As my legacy, I want to continue to support students,” he says, “I encourage others to seriously consider something similar.”

Your legacy can be their future.



It's simple to impact Converse via your current and future plans...

- Name Converse as a retirement plan or life insurance policy beneficiary
- Include Converse in your will or trust
- Donate appreciated stocks to save on taxes
- Make a gift that generates fixed income for your lifetime

Begin at any stage of life. Your gift can help:

- Provide ongoing scholarship support for students
- Recruit and retain top faculty
- Enable cutting edge development in academics
- Give students opportunities to learn through travel abroad



Interested?

Let us tell you more about financial and estate planning opportunities:

Mike Kennedy
Assistant VP for Philanthropy
864-596-9390 / mike.kennedy@converse.edu

Marion Rivers Cato '65 Receives Dexter Edgar Converse Award

Marion Cato was honored during the Silver Soiree donor gala and the Founder's Day service in April for her dedicated support and leadership at Converse, and for the example she sets as a devoted community volunteer and accomplished author. Marion and her husband, Wayland, have significantly impacted Converse academics by establishing two endowed scholarship funds and by enabling the Cato Faculty Excellence Award endowment to reward extraordinary faculty members.



Silver Soiree

President Newkirk and the Board of Trustees hosted an evening of dinner and dancing to celebrate donors with lifetime cumulative giving of \$25,000 and above on April 19, 2018.

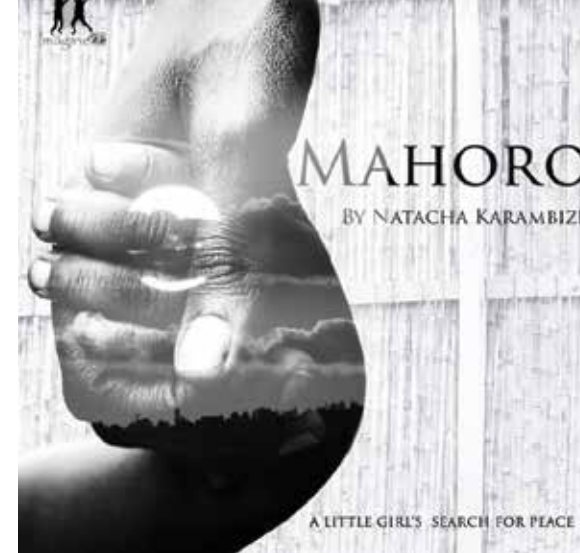




A Thousand Thanks Upscale Tailgate Party

Converse honored donors of \$1,000 and above (contributed between July 1, 2016 – January 1, 2018) at a family-friendly, upscale tailgate party celebrating the first home meet of the new Valkyries Acrobatics and Tumbling team on February 27, 2018.





Founder's Day

On April 20, 2018, the Converse community gathered to celebrate our founding. Keynote speaker Natacha Karambizi '15 shared her personal journey of discovering resilience as the daughter of a Rwandan genocide survivor and as a young woman finding her way in today's world. During the genocide, her father's mother, nine siblings and all of their families were killed. Since graduating from Converse, Natacha has written and published a novella, *Mahoro, a Little Girl's Search for Peace*.



Commencement

Converse held undergraduate and graduate commencement ceremonies on May 19, 2018. Ann Dunwoody, the first woman in US military history to achieve the rank of four-star general, gave the commencement address and received an honorary degree at the undergraduate ceremony. She was nominated for the honor by a fellow trailblazer for women in the US Army, Converse alumna Patricia “Pat” Parsons Hickerson ’64, who served eight years on the Converse Board of Trustees.



Senior Candlelight Dinner

A generous estate gift from Pauline Thomas Bain has endowed the Senior Candlelight dinner, which is held annually just before commencement to welcome the graduating class into the Alumnae Association. Mrs. Bain's daughter, Nancy Bain Coté '79, helped facilitate this gift and the naming of “The Thomas Family Senior Celebration” in honor of Nancy's grandmother, Josephine Alexander Thomas '22, who was the first member of the family to graduate from Converse.



2017-18 Alumnae Events

1. Evening Social in Florence, SC, hosted by Converse
2. Luncheon with President Newkirk at Greensboro Country Club in Greensboro, NC, hosted by Jacquelyn Mapp Farlow '58
3. Luncheon with President Newkirk in Tampa, FL, hosted by Converse
4. Evening Social in Charlotte, NC, hosted by Austin P. Faulk '95 and Libby C. Tilson '79
5. Evening Reception with President Newkirk in Dallas, TX, hosted by Kay Ferguson '78
6. Luncheon at the Houston Club in Houston TX, hosted by Paula Wagner Gay '77
7. Evening Reception in West Palm Beach, FL, hosted by Sue Fan Ferguson '70
8. Luncheon with President Newkirk at the Westminster Canterbury in Richmond, VA, hosted by Sally Maynard '59
9. Luncheon with President Newkirk at Mountain Brook Country Club in Birmingham, AL, hosted by Gillian Goodrich '68



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- 10. Evening Social with faculty in Beaufort, SC, hosted by Jennifer Tuckwiller '96 introducing Boone Hopkins, Dean of the School of the Arts
- 11. Evening on the Battery in Charleston, SC, hosted by Margaret Rinehart Smith '79
- 12. Spring Brunch in Alexandria, VA for alumnae from the DC area hosted by Debbie Keefe '78, Helen Tolar '98 and Martha Marks '78
- 13. Ladies Luncheon at Nashville City Club and Happy Hour at Table 3 in Nashville, TN, with President Newkirk, hosted by Mindy Thompson Orman '71



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Summer Reunion Fun

Pink Panthers were prowling, Richard fans were rampant, Roxie's recent grads were reunited, and Modine loyalists were living it up during Reunion Weekend 2018! The new summertime, stay-on-campus format continues to be a huge hit, with dinner and dancing under the stars on back campus, late nights laughing in the residence halls, the parade of classes, and celebrating our award winners. See more at www.converse.edu/Reunion



Coming Soon To A Town Near You!

Converse is hitting the road again this fall!
Don't miss the chance to connect with College reps and alumnae in your area for fun, food and fellowship.
Spring events coming soon!

Tryon, SC September 5
Columbia, SC September 8
Rock Hill, SC October 4
New York City, NY October 10
Greenwich, CT October 10
Boston, MA October 11
Raleigh, NC TBD

Get the details at www.converse.edu/alumni/gather.

Interested in hosting a Converse event near you?
Let us know! AlumnaeEvent@converse.edu







Share your life events via Class Notes!

Alumnae are encouraged to submit news updates and photos for the Class Notes section of the winter alumnae newsletter.

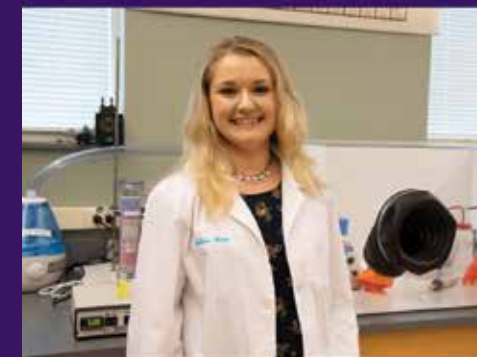
Please send via email to classnotes@converse.edu or mail to:

Class Notes
Converse College Office of Alumnae
580 East Main Street, Spartanburg, SC 29302

The deadline for inclusion in the next newsletter is November 1, 2018.

UNRESTRICTED POSSIBILITIES

Together, there is no limit to what
we can help students achieve.



FUTURE RESEARCH SCIENTIST
Gillian '19



FUTURE EDUCATOR
Essence '20



FUTURE PUBLISHER
Makayla '19

CAN WE COUNT **YOU** IN?

converse.edu/give

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Annual Fund