

your CONNECTION

A Newsletter for Converse Alumni

Winter 2023

*President Boone Hopkins
with members of the
Alumni Association
Board at their
Fall 2022 meeting*



**A LOOK AT
WHAT'S INSIDE**

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LETTER

From Alumni Director



Dearest Alumni,

Greetings from Converse! As we welcome the New Year, we look forward to the opportunities we have ahead to chart a vibrant path for the University and the excitement 2023 has in store for our Alma Mater.

During this time of beginnings, Converse University's new President, Dr. Boone J. Hopkins has brought a vibrant energy to our community. Under his leadership, with direction from the Board of Trustees, Converse is embarking on a three-year strategic vision plan – a bold new proposal launching this fall that is designed around enriching programs, enhancing places, and empowering people.

Converse is a place where lives are transformed and where we embrace our mission of serving our students and our community. The Alumni Board's recently established Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee is supporting that vision as it aligns itself with the University's strategic plan and is finding new

ways to ensure all of our alumni feel a sense of belonging when they return home to campus.

As you will see on the pages ahead, travel season has been in full swing! This fall brought with it opportunities for us to reconnect and engage with you, our alumni who have made Converse the amazing place we love so dearly.

Whether at one of the stops on the President's Alumni Tour or at Reunion Weekend this June – I look forward to more moments to be together as one Converse community!

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jessica G. Eggimann '00".

Jessica G. Eggimann '00

Director of Alumni Relations & Advisory Boards

864.596.9011 | alumni@converse.edu

P.S. Read on to discover this year's exciting Reunion Weekend schedule – and be sure to register!

HIGHLIGHTS

From the Alumni Association

MEET YOUR 2022-2023 ALUMNI BOARD

LIBBY TILSON '79

Matthews, NC
President

SAMANTHA LARKINS '12

Spartanburg, SC
Immediate Past President

CHUNSTA MILLER '02

Moore, SC
Giving Officer

KATHRYNE KLINE TYNDALL '13

Washington, DC
Secretary

RACHEL BISHOP '99

Franklin, NC
Converse Alumni Retention & Recruitment Efforts (CARRE), Chair

VALERIE DOWLING '07

Washington, DC
Connecting Alumni to Converse (CAC), Chair

MIYA WALKER '12

Atlanta, GA
Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Committee (DEIC), Chair

VICTORIA BALL SHERIDAN '14

Richmond, VA
Recognition (REC), Chair

JOY NANNEY FINCH '77

Inman, SC
Music Representative

ALIYAH HANCOCK '21

Greenville, SC
Young Alumni Representative

ADELAIDE CAPERS JOHNSON '69

Greenville, SC
Golden Club Representative

KITTY YOUNG '66

Greenville, SC
Golden Club Representative

DIANE PICKENS O'CONNELL '94

Spartanburg, SC
Graduate School Representative

SONYA GRAY '15

Spartanburg, SC
Converse II Representative

SOPHIA CRAWFORD-MAPP '13

Charlotte, NC
Member At-Large

SHENNA GAINES '13

Indian Trail, NC
Member At-Large

FRANCES NEVILL '19

Orlando, FL
Member At-Large

BONNIE BAILEY WEBSTER '94

Spartanburg, SC
Member At-Large

NINA SULLIVAN '77

Greenville, SC
1970's Decade Representative

NAKIA MARTIN ALEXANDER '97

Atlanta, GA
1990's Decade Representative

CHRISTI LEWIS '95

Columbia, SC
1990's Decade Representative

SUSAN MISKELLY '99

Rock Hill, SC
1990's Decade Representative

CARY PERKINS '96

Greenville, SC
1990's Decade Representative

RHONDA SOWELL '98

Spartanburg, SC
1990's Decade Representative

MELISSIA BRANNEN '03

Lexington, SC
2000's Decade Representative

MYLES LAWTER '13

Chicago, IL
2010's Decade Representative

ASHTON LESIAK '11

Roanoke, VA
2010's Decade Representative

GWEN STEMBRIDGE '10

Cleveland, OH
2010's Decade Representative

HANNAH CRAFT '21

Greer, SC
2020's Decade Representative



BOARD DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING

The Alumni Association Board met on September 17, 2022 for its fall board meeting. The day was filled with strategic planning, group breakout sessions, updates from campus administration, and great alumni networking.

Meet Hanna Craft '21 and Aaliyah Hancock '21, two of the newest, and youngest, Alumni Association Board members.

COMMITTEE UPDATES

Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Committee (DEIC)

Throughout their first year as an official standing committee on the Board, the DEIC members have shown steadfast commitment and dedication to their new role. The committee is working hard to create opportunities for meaningful, diverse experiences among generations of alumni to further support a strong and inclusive Converse community.



The DEIC working beside the new mural, designed by Mikki Nunn '22, in the recently renovated SGA and Multicultural suite, which was made possible by funding from Rock the Tower 2020 and the Jones Rushing Scholars Program.



The Nominating Committee

Do you love Converse? Are you excited with what is happening at your *alma mater*? The Alumni Association's nominations committee is seeking candidates who will bring the necessary wisdom, effectiveness, candor, and creative thinking to the Board. Nominations for the 2024 term are now being accepted through February 1, 2024. Nominate today!

converse.edu/AlumniBoard

The AAB captured at the fall board meeting discussing Converse's exceptional network of alumni.



The Recognition Committee

The Recognition Committee is also working diligently to recognize and celebrate outstanding alumni who demonstrate high levels of achievement and/or service in one or more of Converse's seven core values: excellence, integrity, exploration, diversity, respect, community, and progress. While the deadline for the 2023 Award nominations is now closed, we are accepting nominations for the 2024 Alumni Achievement Awards through February 1, 2024. Nominate today!

converse.edu/Alumni-Awards

Jeanne Foster Clark '54, the Mae Elizabeth Kilgo Spirit Award recipient, is pictured with President Hopkins at the Alumni Achievement Award Ceremony during Reunion Weekend.

Connecting Alumni to Converse (CAC)

Formerly known as TAPP, the CAC committee is focused on fostering relations between alumni through the strengthening of our Alumni Chapters. The committee will be helping to plan, coordinate, and implement events that will engage alumni. Be on the lookout for more information from CAC and upcoming events in your area!



Former Spartanburg Chapter chair, Sandy Hartnett '75 and current chair, Jackie Bielewicz '15, gathered together for a wine tasting with Brooke Rowell '13.



Two proud parents help Chelsea Palotta '26 settle into her new residential hall at Move-In Day 2022.

Converse Alumni Recruitment and Retention Efforts (CARRE)

The Converse Alumni Recruitment and Retention Effort (CARRE) is focused on strengthening our admissions efforts and engaging with current students adding to their positive Converse experience and increasing retention.

Refer a student! converse.edu/CARRE

REUNION WEEKEND

JUNE 2-4, 2023



Join the classes ending in '3 and '8 and the Class of 2022 celebrating their traditional 'One Year' reunion. We especially welcome the Class of 1973, who will be inducted into the Golden Club to mark their 50th Reunion, and the Class of 1998, who will be inducted into the inaugural Silver Club to mark their 25th Reunion.

All Converse alumni are invited to reunite with old friends and make new ones.

REGISTER TODAY! [CONVERSE.EDU/REUNION](https://converse.edu/reunion)

SCHEDULE

Friday, June 3

Check-In

12:00 pm—3:00 pm, Wilson Hall Front Porch

Sip 'n Stroll Campus Tour

4:00 pm—5:30 pm

Departs from Dalton Lobby, Wilson Hall

Enjoy the beauty of campus in summer bloom as you learn a bit of history as well as the latest developments at Converse. Adult beverages served.

Dinner in Gee

6:30 pm—7:30 pm,

Gee Dining Hall, Wilson Hall

Share a sit down 'family style' meal with your classmates in Gee.

Golden Club Reception and Dinner with President Boone Hopkins*

The Piedmont Club, Palmetto Room

5:30 pm—6:30 pm, Cocktails

6:30 pm—8:00 pm, Dinner

Transportation will be provided to and from campus.

**Event exclusively for the Class of 1973*

After Dinner Options:

S'mores Before You Snore
9:00 pm—11:00 pm, The Cabin

Grab your crew and catch up over roasted marshmallows and a nightcap by the fire.

Explore Downtown Spartanburg

If it's been awhile since you've been back to Sparkle City, you're in for a treat. Scoot downtown on your way in or out of town to discover something new or stick with your old haunts - NuWay anyone? Downtown Spartanburg has something for everyone! From putt-putt at the Fr8yard, a tour of the Johnson Collection at the TJC Gallery, to enjoying a local craft brew & live music at RJ Rockers, you'll see what our students see. Spartanburg is the place to be.

Saturday, June 4**Breakfast Buffet**

8:00 am—10:00 am, Gee Dining Hall, Wilson Hall

Roll out of bed and walk to Gee for a leisurely feast. PJ's and slippers are still welcome!

Alumni Association Board Meeting

9:00 am—10:00 am
The Bain Room, Wilson Hall

All Class Photos and Class Meetings

(Meetings only for Classes ending in '3 & '8)

11:00 am—12:15 pm, All Classes, Carmichael Hall
11:30 am, 50th Class Meeting, Mickel Library

Parade of Classes

12:15 pm, Mickel Library - Wilson Hall

*Hold that banner high and cheer each other on as you stroll down memory lane with your classmates.
Look for the mimosa tent on the front lawn for line up!*

Alumni Award Ceremony & Luncheon

12:30 pm—2:00 pm, Gee Dining Hall, Wilson Hall

Share in the celebration of the newest members of the Golden Club, Silver Club, and our 2023 Alumni Achievement Award recipients.

After Lunch Options**Alumni Art Exhibition**

2:00 pm—3:00 pm, Milliken Art Gallery

Make your way across back campus, down the hill and wander through the Milliken Art Gallery. It will be filled

with Alumni works and an opportunity to meet our amazing Art & Design faculty, possibly the artists themselves!

*To participate in the 2023 Alumni Art Exhibition visit:
www.converse.edu/AlumniArt*

Mosaic: Black Alumni Celebration

2:30 pm—3:30 pm, Phifer Upper Lobby and Porch

Black, African, and African-American alumni have been, and continue to be, an impactful contributor to the Converse community. We envision that this gathering will be a time for Black alums to meet each other and learn more about the important history of Black alumni at Converse.

Annual Alumni Recital

3:00 pm—4:00 pm, Daniel Recital Hall

Alumni Recital is a low-pressure affair full of laughter, love, and great music shared among friends in the warm acoustics of Daniel Recital Hall.

*In order to participate in the performance, please email
Mildred.Roche@Converse.edu by May 19, 2023.*

Lavender Tea: LGBTQIA+ Alumni Celebration

3:30 pm—4:30 pm, The Cabin

Converse's LGBTQIA+ alumni are a catalyst for bringing and creating community and belonging to the Converse campus. Join us for an inclusive celebration focusing on conversation and connection.

Converse College for Women

2:00 pm—5:00 pm
CCW Commons, 3rd Floor West Wilson

Drop by to meet Dr. Chandra Hopkins, Dean of the CCW and Karen Mims '22, Assistant to the CCW and Admissions Coordinator! They'd love to answer your questions, share updates on programming, traditions, and community service projects housed within the Converse College for Women.

Color Your Cares Away

2:00 pm.—5:00 pm, Lee Parlor, Wilson Hall

Alumni designed coloring pages available for you to color your cares away, catch up with classmates, and even carry a few home.

This Cudd's For You!

2:00 pm.—5:00 pm, Cudd Hall

Meander past our beloved Cudd Hall and check out the progress made on the renovation and restoration project.

Tie-Dye your Tee!

2:00 pm—5:00 pm, Front Lawn

Whether you're a Pink Panther, Red Devil, or Hail the Purple & Gold, we'll have all the supplies to bring color and a retro style to your 2023 Reunion tee. Look for the tent on the front lawn and listen to the music!

Hopkins' Happy Hour

6:30 pm, The Quad

Fancy a cocktail (or mocktail!) with President Boone and Dean Chandra Hopkins? Freddie will be pouring Purple Power Proseccos, Red Devil Delights, and Pink Panther Prowlers as we snap selfies, reminisce, and laugh until our sides hurt. Join the fun as we kick off our main event!

All Class BBQ

7:00 pm, Back Campus

Mosey down the hill and join your classmates for a sunset dinner with twinkling lights and big top tents, this annual meal is one for the ages!

It's a Class Act & Dorm Decor Awards

7:30 pm, The Quad

And the winners are...There are two Class Act Awards up for grabs, one for the total amount raised by a class and the second awarded to the class with the largest number of gifts made. Can your class beat last year's winners, the Class of '73 and '87?

Turn it up! DJ Dance Party

8:00 pm—10:00 pm

Bring your best dance moves as we move and groove to hits through the decades. Don't miss this chance to party like it's 1889!

Sunday, June 5

Until the Next One!

Grab 'N Go Breakfast & Check Out

8:00 am—11:00 am, Dalton Lobby, Wilson Hall*

Return your keys, snag final hugs, and grab a coffee for your journey home.

**Late check-out can not be accommodated.
Thank you for understanding.*

At Your Leisure:

Decorate Your Suite

Pack your tapestries, brush off your album covers, and bring out the scrapbooks...it's time to relive residence hall life with your college pals all weekend long. An award for 'Best Dressed Suite' will be announced at the Saturday night BBQ!

In Memoriam

Gibbs Chapel, Montgomery Student Center

The chapel will be open throughout the weekend with a memorial to those classmates we've lost over the past year. Come by at your convenience to pay your respects and observe a moment of silent reflection.

Hospitality Rooms

These 'suite spots' will be stocked with snacks and beverages throughout the weekend.

Lee Parlor, Wilson Hall

Second Floor Common Area, Fleming Hall

*The Golden Club, First Floor Conference Room, Fleming Hall**

** Event exclusively for the Class of 1973*

Montgomery Fitness Facilities

Whether you enjoy hitting the elliptical, TRX training, or spreading out your yoga mat, Montgomery Student Center will be open for you to fit in your workout if you'd like!

Stock up on Converse Swag!

Valkyries Bookstore, Montgomery Student Center

We'll have 'vintage' items aplenty and alumni receive a discount at checkout.

Be sure to visit
converse.edu/Reunion
for the latest schedule
and to register!

Meet **KAREN MIMS '22** Converse College for Women Assistant and Admissions Coordinator



What excites you most about your new position as the Converse College for Women (CCW) Assistant and Admissions Coordinator? Any big goals for your role?

I am most excited about working with students at every level. I get to engage with prospective students, current students, and alumni for all sorts of different events and activities. It is so heartwarming to hear an alumna say, "Thank you for your invitation! I'll be there!" It's also exciting to hear a prospective student say, "I think Converse is the one." The heart of the Women's College is the people and I think that's the best part of it all.

In terms of goals for my role, I want to find long-lasting solutions to some things that won't be changing for a while. For example, how do we digitize certain Big Sis/Little Sis elements to keep all of our data in one spot? Who are our key CCW community connections and how can we form long-lasting relationships? I have long-term questions and goals in the back of my mind at all times as I work through projects and events!

From SGA president to active alumna to Converse employee, you've been very involved at Converse. What inspires you to maintain a steadfast connection to the institution?

My answer will always be the people. I hope I will always get to work with friendly, family-oriented, ambitious, and kind people. The students, my supervisors, and my teammates are all of those things and I couldn't ask for better people to connect with. Converse has also been my "home away from home" for the past four years and it didn't feel right for me to leave just yet.

Prior to graduating, you and your classmate Maddie Buisch '22 established the Buisch/Mims Scholarship to support students within the CCW. What prompted you to create this scholarship?

There are three main things that made me text Maddie B. one day during the fall of our senior year with, "Would you like to create a student scholarship with me?"



Karen Mims (right) with inaugural Mims/Buisch scholarship recipient LeAnna Hawkins.

essay and gifted me a scholarship that covered some of my extra school expenses and textbooks for a semester. Claudia's thoughtfulness and care through the creation of a scholarship that went directly back to a student stayed with me all this time.

Firstly, as I was entering my sophomore year, an alumna, Claudia Coffin '19, created an essay scholarship that she funded with her own money. Despite all of the entries, Claudia chose my



*Karen Mims (center) with
Director of Alumni Relations,
Jessica Eggimann and Dean of the
Converse College for Women, Dr.
Chandra Hopkins at Move-in Day*

Secondly, I have received last-minute, emergency financial aid, loans, and scholarships to cover the costs of my Converse education. I credit Dr. JW Kellam in Financial Planning for keeping me on campus. Converse was loyal and took care of me, so I will be loyal and take care back.

Lastly, financial security and accessibility have become increasingly important to me. If I can help at least one student offset the cost of higher education, then I hope that's one more person that will branch out and help another student, and so on and so on! I love higher education, learning, and all of the opportunities this type of environment can provide. But what good is it if the people that need these resources the most can't access them?

As an active young alumna, is there anything you might share with others who are interested in connecting with the Alumni Association?

If there are no other responsibilities standing in your way, then just say "yes." Attend events. Help out when the Alumni Association calls out for assistance for an Admissions event. Pop by Alumni events. Connection is important. Saying "yes" will help you stay connected to more folks than you'd expect!

EVERY GIFT COUNTS

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ODDS & ENDS

from Around Campus



Inauguration of 12th President of Converse

Please join us on Friday, April 21, for the inauguration of Dr. Boone J. Hopkins as the 12th President of Converse University. The installation ceremony will be held at 10:30 a.m. in Zimmerli Performance Center's Twichell Auditorium. Immediately following the ceremony, guests are invited to join us for lunch on the front lawn.

For more information and to RSVP to lunch, visit converse.edu/inauguration.



Scanning the Past into Present

In 2022, Converse received a Growth Grant from South Carolina Humanities. Thanks to this grant and a partnership with Spartanburg County Public Library, Converse has taken big strides towards preserving and digitizing more than 50 years of yearbooks. This newly established online collection helps to make the institution's history and collections more easily accessible for both the Converse community and external researchers.

To learn more and check out the new online collection, visit converse.edu/archives.



Preserving Cudd Hall

Converse is in the midst of a \$4.7 million revitalization of Cudd Hall. This transformative renovation will preserve the building's historic character while creating a dynamic learning and living environment that supports student success.

If you would like to support one of Converse's most beloved residential halls, please contact the Philanthropy Office at philanthropy@converse.edu.



Catch a Show

Theatre Converse presents a whimsical new interpretation of CATS, a sung-through musical composed by Andrew Lloyd Webber, based on the 1939 poetry collection Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats by T. S. Eliot.

This show runs April 13-16.
Visit culture@converse.edu for more information.

Check out other news from around campus at converse.edu/news

FALL 2022

Event Highlights

Hendersonville, NC Alumni Reception

hosted by Lillian Montgomery Lilly
and Rose Montgomery Johnston



Greensboro, NC Alumni Reception



Raleigh, NC Alumni Reception



Knoxville, TN Alumni Luncheon



Winston Salem, NC Alumni Luncheon

hosted by Ann Joyner Cross '70,
Mercer Taylor Jones '73,
and Ruthlee Phillips Orr '62



Augusta, GA Alumni Reception



Atlanta, GA Alumni Reception hosted by Gay Colyer '73 and fellow Atlanta alumnae, Nakia Martin Alexander '97, Sandra Greene Blalock '71, Sarah Mercer Chatel '79, Diane Moffett Kellum '73, Mary Gossett Dalton King '75, Jennifer Frith Knapp '00, Sally Lockwood Mitchell '69, Sandra Shearouse Morelli '78, Susanna Knight Roberts '00, and Lydia Anne Wood '92



Spartanburg, SC Alumni Fall Drop-In at the President's Residence

Hosted by Converse University President, Boone J. Hopkins, Dr. Chandra Owenby Hopkins, Dean of the Converse College for Women, and Sandy Russell Hartnett '75, Trustee



Nashville, TN Alumni Reception hosted by Ruth L. Cate and Dr. Frances L. Cate '04



Charlotte, NC Alumni Holiday Reception

hosted by Linda Layman Redding '88, Trustee; Wallace Davison Prestwood '89, Trustee; and Libby Tilson '79, Alumni Association President; along with fellow alumnae Cindy Greene Goldsmith '96, Britney Jeffords Greeson '00, Nancy Schwarz Lowry '01, Susan Williams Lynch '89, Rachel Stanley MacBain '79, Christi Williamson Pringle '93, Natalie Audish Scott '92, and Patti Maxwell Snow '88



Coming Soon to a Town Near You

The Office of Alumni Relations is hitting the road again this spring.
Visit converse.edu/alumni/gather to view upcoming events!



Office of Alumni Relations
580 East Main Street
Spartanburg, SC 29302
converse.edu/alumni

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