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# CONVERSE MAGAZINE

See What the Converse  
Community Has Been Up To!

Read more at  
[converse.edu/magazine](https://converse.edu/magazine)



COMMUTER CENTER GIFT



**“Courage requires a decision.”**



CHEMISTRY OF CHEESE



RESTORED TO GLORY



SCHOLARSHIP IMPACT

# WE Change the World WILL

“This was the opportunity  
of a lifetime. For me,  
the experience was  
transformative.”

-Jerome Harris '25

*Politics Major and the first male head  
delegate of Converse's world-recognized  
Model Programs - speaking on his recent  
trip to the United Arab Emirates*



*The Converse College for Women celebrated International Women's Day  
on March 7 by hosting the annual Women's Leadership Speaker Series.  
Keynote speakers Kelli Valade, CEO of Denny's Inc., and the Honorable Joy  
Stoney-Reid '00 empowered the audience with their stories of resilience.*







# MAY DAY WEEKEND

We're thrilled to welcome Valkyrie families for **May Day Weekend!** Join us May 1-3 for a family and friends celebration packed with time-honored traditions and unforgettable experiences!

This is a very special time when the Converse community comes together to celebrate academic excellence, special events, and so much more!

Visit [www.converse.edu/familyweekend](http://www.converse.edu/familyweekend) to register and view the full schedule. The last day to register is April 28.

## Making History

**"Converse Athletics is stronger now because of what these individuals accomplished throughout their careers, and I could not be more excited to start this new tradition."**

– Associate Vice President and Director of Athletics, Jenn Bell

*Margaret Moore, Joy Couch, and Jenni Russell Currier '13 were inducted into the Inaugural Hall of Fame class in February. Read more online about each of their remarkable careers and see photos from the reception.*



## Love Thy Neighbor

As part of our unique Jan Term, University Chaplain Rev. Eliza Smith DeBevoise offered a thoughtful and action-packed Faith and Activism course for the Nisbet Honors Program. The course focused on how several world religions understand the concept of "love of neighbor" as a call to service. Converse students Grace Baum and Abeeha Sajid graciously documented their experiences to share with our Converse community. Scan the QR code on the back cover to check out their stories.



## The Challenge of a Lifetime

*Any teacher can enter a classroom and teach, but few make a tangible difference that will impact students beyond graduation.*

The impact of Professor Emerita Janis Dengler, affectionately known as "Professor D," began in 1960 when she got an unexpected call to teach Physical Education. Dengler went on to transform Converse's dance ensemble from a student club to a formal performance, and now, an established major.

When a former Dean suggested that Professor D start a scholarship, she rose to the challenge. Retired at 72, Dengler was offering dance classes for senior citizens. Instead of receiving payment for her class, she made one request - donate to her scholarship. For more than 15 years, Dengler taught twice weekly as donations came in small increments, making her dream of a dance scholarship a reality.

Now, six decades from when she started at Converse, the Janis Dengler Endowed Dance Scholarship was awarded in the fall of 2024 to Eliza McManus '25 and Rylie Budnick '26.

Visit our website to learn more about these students and Professor D's continued impact on the heart of our campus.



**"Converse champions student success through leadership opportunities and career guidance."**

–Yolanda Escudero '24

## Alumni Continuing Legacy of Philanthropy

Converse University and the Spartanburg County Foundation have enjoyed decades of collaboration, and four Converse graduates are currently part of this legacy to strengthen community impact.

Ashley Whitt '11 serves as Vice President of Grants and Community Impact, Hailey Barnhill '15 is a Grantmaking Officer, Nathaly Hasana '24 is Administrative Assistant, and Yolanda Escudero '24 is the Center for Philanthropy Operations Associate.

These alumni embody Converse's mission of empowering students to become transformative leaders who see clearly, decide wisely, and act justly. It's only fitting they carry on that tradition at The Spartanburg County Foundation, which tackles the most pressing challenges facing Spartanburg.

Check out our website to read the inspiring stories of these four exceptional alumni and discover their collective impact on the Spartanburg community.

Read more at [converse.edu/magazine](http://converse.edu/magazine)