

CONVERSE

580

EAST MAIN

WILSON HALL

For Friends of Converse College



From Here to Anywhere

Inspired by the vision of its founders, Converse has a 125-year-long history of advancing women who effect positive change in the world. With their Converse degree in-hand, our young alumni are launching incredible careers and leveraging their education as a solid foundation for graduate school placements in some of the nation's most renowned programs.

Converse alumni are known for exploring the world and making a profound impact on their communities. It's no surprise, then, that these graduates are engaged and adaptable citizens. From global to local, Sri Lanka to Greenville, SC, they are working to solve complex issues and to create a safer, more humane and sustainable world for future generations.

While Converse might be small in scale, it is a College with extensive reach that develops the unique voices of students, their sense of value in the world, and their vision for the future – giving them confidence to take on most anything. Whether that be fostering passion for international diplomacy within young people or founding a new theater company, a Converse education propels alumni to new heights in their careers and personal lives.

In this third edition of 580, we celebrate young alumni who have gone from here to anywhere to change the world!

Chris Keane Photography



A MESSAGE FROM
THE PRESIDENT

How do you characterize Converse? Throughout our 125th anniversary year, I had the opportunity to ask this question of students and alumni, faculty and staff, friends and community partners. Here is a sampling of what you shared:

- | | | | |
|-------------|-------------|-----------------|---------------------|
| ALIVE | PROGRESSIVE | GRATEFUL | FULL OF OPPORTUNITY |
| VIBRANT | DYNAMIC | SISTERHOOD | PROVOCATIVE |
| CARING | LOVING | ENGAGING | SUPPORTIVE |
| BOLD | AMBITIOUS | GIVING | OPEN TO POSSIBILITY |
| ADVENTUROUS | UNDAUNTED | ENTREPRENEURIAL | OF OUR TIME |

This university, at its best, pushes boundaries, willingly takes risks and creates new pathways of opportunity in order to fulfill her mission and effect positive change in the world—and so, too, do her people. *From Here to Anywhere*, the theme of this 580 issue, emphasizes the impact that a distinctively Converse voice, value and vision can have within our collegiate community and far beyond our gates into the world at large.

Converse accomplished and celebrated many great things during our 125th anniversary year. We completed a successful, unprecedented fundraising campaign for capital projects such as the renovation of Pell and Dexter Residence Halls and construction of the Marsha H. Gibbs Field House, bringing to life long-standing visions for a First-Year Experience and an expanded athletics facility. We established two deeply meaningful tributes to individuals who have created unparalleled legacies at this College: The Barnet Commons in honor of William Barnet III and The Johnson Plaza dedicated to Susan Phifer Johnson '65 and George Dean Johnson, Jr. With the Converse seal at its center, the Plaza also ushers in a new tradition for our 125-year-old community that celebrates the Founder's Ideal of enabling students to "see clearly, decide wisely and act justly," and honors the seven core values of the College—

excellence, integrity, exploration, diversity, respect, community and progress.

With our bold move to reset undergraduate tuition to \$16,500 for this year, a 43% decrease over last year's price, Converse became an innovative leader in the heated national debate about the value and affordability of a college education. We have, likewise, increased our traditional undergraduate enrollment by more than 20% in just two years. All the while, Converse continues to enhance the high-quality, customized aspects and outcomes that make our experience distinctive. To this end, we launched a broad-based strategic planning initiative called L.E.A.D. (Learning, Enrollment, Access and Activation, Development) in late August. This student-centered effort will provide a roadmap for growth and investment, ensuring that we remain committed, first and foremost, to advancing the voice, value and vision of a distinctively Converse education. I look forward to sharing these plans with you later this year, and with them, the promise of expanding the horizons of Converse, sending our graduates from here to anywhere!

Betsy

Elizabeth A. Fleming, PhD
President

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From Here to Anywhere

Kaylee Boalt '14

*Program Associate, National Council on U.S.-Arab Relations (NCUSAR)
Washington, DC*



Boalt's work focuses on developing and facilitating the 21 nationwide Model Arab League (MAL) conferences as well as representing NCUSAR overseas on student/faculty cultural exchange programs. Boalt is an alumna of MAL, having served at the highest levels as Secretary General of the 2014 National University MAL and as a participant in the 2013 Saudi Arabia Exchange Fellowship.

Madison Webb '11

*Foundation Officer, Pacific Council on International Policy
Los Angeles, CA*



Webb was recently hired as a Foundation Officer for the Pacific Council on International Policy, a non-profit organization committed to building the vast potential of the West Coast to positively impact global issues, discourse, and policy. In her role, Webb helps to build a strategic, more centralized fundraising program.

Natasha Senanayake '12

*Music Composer, Contemporary British Woodwind Sheet Music
Company Director/Founder, Theatre Junction
Colombo, Sri Lanka*



Senanayake, a freelance composer, music director and the 2015-2016 Commonwealth Music Ambassador, is the founder of Theatre Junction, an amateur theatre company in Colombo, Sri Lanka that provides an avenue for young adults to collaborate, create and perform. Last year, she won the inaugural Commonwealth Music Competition in Glasgow, which includes a year-long ambassadorship.

Tina Rohner '07

*Investment Specialist, Asian Development Bank
Manila, Philippines*



Rohner works for Asian Development Bank after having spent the first five years of her career with Goldman Sachs. The Asian Development Bank aims for an Asia and Pacific that is free from poverty. Her focus is on developing investment strategies and originating, executing and managing Asian frontier and emerging market private equity and venture capital fund investments.

Laurie Peebles '10 and '14 MM

*Music Therapist, Greenville Health System
Spartanburg, SC*



Peebles is a board-certified music therapist leading a new program, funded by a Livestrong Foundation grant, for Greenville Health System's nationally-recognized Cancer Institute. Launched in July, the program offers patients and family members an opportunity for music therapy that complements their medical care. Peebles also educates patients and other healthcare professionals about the benefits of music therapy.

Veronica Obregon-Perko '12

*Microbiology and Immunology Graduate Student, University of Texas
Health Science Center
San Antonio, TX*



Obregon-Perko is a microbiology and immunology graduate student researching host immune responses to infection. Her current thesis work focuses on identifying genes in non-human primates that are involved in HIV resistance, with the hopes of contributing to a new HIV treatment. In 2014, she was inducted into the American Society for Virology.

Jed Dearybury '03

*Second-grade Teacher, Woodland Heights Elementary School
Boiling Springs, SC*



Dearybury was a finalist for the South Carolina Teacher of the Year Award this year. In 2013-2014, he was named Woodland Heights Elementary School Teacher of the Year and Spartanburg District 6 Teacher of the Year. Dearybury's goal is to love and support the learning of children in his classroom by providing them an environment where they can flourish. A National Board Certified Teacher, he has been awarded many grants and accolades for teaching innovation.



John Bald

The Man Behind the Curtain

Center American College Theatre Festival, and as Southeastern Regional Coordinator of Alpha Psi Omega National Theatre Honor Society.

the unique challenges actors can face on stage. When asked if he did so, he said he did in college but “did not enjoy it.”

“John has a great depth of knowledge, historical perspective and an ability to be both direct and

John Bald is a maker. For more than three decades, he has built sets and designed theater to showcase the talent of innumerable Converse women. He has also built a love and understanding of theater in the hearts and minds of his students. As John prepares to retire from Converse in May, we asked him to reflect on his time here.

John is clearly a popular figure on campus. As he sat on the porch swing of Wilson Hall, students streamed by. Most waved and smiled – he knew them all by name. But how did he get here?

From an early age, John knew he wanted to be a part of the theater, “I started out in high school. I was never on stage, but found that backstage and designing sets was my passion.” John does admit that any set, lighting or costume designer should take acting classes in order to understand

John earned a BA in theatre from Baldwin-Wallace College, and an MFA in theatre design from Brandeis University. He then taught theatre at the University of St. Thomas and St. Catherine’s University, both in St. Paul, MN, where he also “shoveled a lot of snow.”

John headed south to Converse in 1982 as the designer and technical director for the theatre department. He teaches scenery and lighting design, theatre history, stage makeup, play analysis, theatre architecture and public speaking. He has also contributed to the larger theater community in Spartanburg, designing productions for the Spartanburg Little Theatre.

When asked about his favorite shows, John replies, “My favorite show is always the one I’m currently working on.” For *Cabaret*, which was opening at the time of our conversation, John created a fantastic set with a giant glittering arch. To design a set, John begins with the script, “You have to be able to read the subtext: What is the story being told? How can the set move the story forward?”

John became chair of the Department of Theatre and Dance in 1993 and continued for 20 years. The department has grown a great deal under his leadership, adding several new faculty positions and increasing the number of majors.

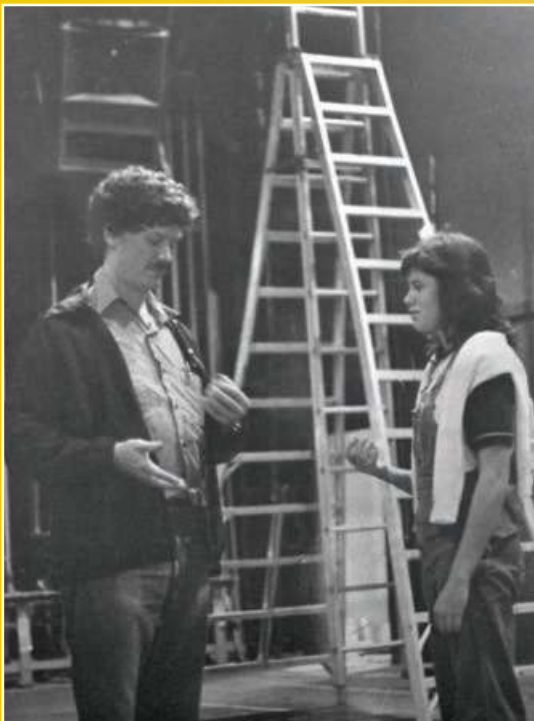
Off campus, he has taken a leadership role in regional theater as the treasurer and past-president of the South Carolina Theatre Association. He also serves as a correspondent for the Kennedy



gentle simultaneously,” says Richard Higgs, Dean of the School of the Arts. “He is an individual upon whom I depend, seek counsel from, and share a mutual dry wit. With the twitch of his moustache, the glint in his eye, and an ever present smile, John is a true gentleman of the theatre.”

What is next for John? He plans to remain in Spartanburg, and take about a month off. Then get back to the work of making things. He has always wanted to build furniture, and plans to set up a home workshop for this purpose. In closing, John mused, “Life is unplanned. Theater isn’t.”

The Converse community is fortunate to have had John Bald’s creative plans and vision for so many years on campus.

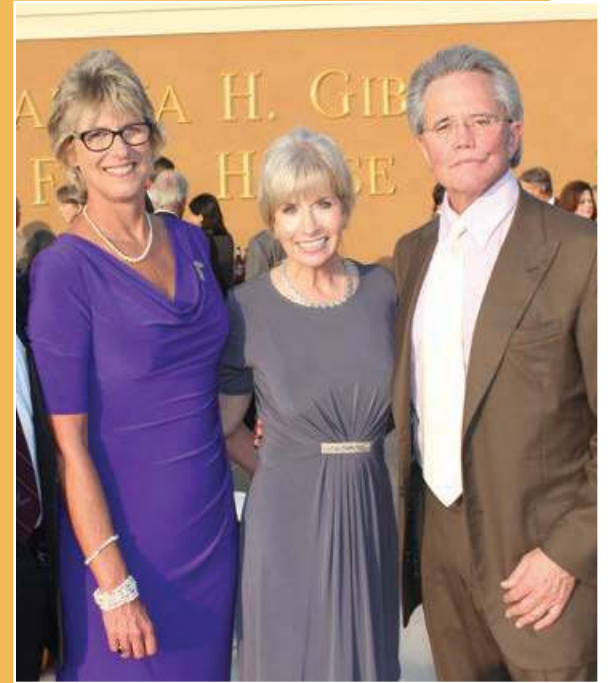


125 Reasons to Celebrate

Reunion Weekend – April 25-26, 2014



Marsha H. Gibbs Field House Dedication – September 17, 2014



A Thousand Thanks Donor Gala – September 18, 2014



Barnet Commons Dedication – September 18, 2014



Opening Convocation – September 19, 2014



Pell Hall Dedication – September 19, 2014



Johnson Plaza Dedication – November 15, 2014



From the Field to the Court

Over the past decade, Converse has doubled its number of sports programs and nearly quadrupled its number of student-athletes. The Valkyries Athletics Program continues to thrive and celebrate the early successes of its 2014-2015 season.



The Valkyries Soccer team realized a historic win in the Conference Carolinas Championship in October, with a 3-0 victory over North Greenville. Converse came into the match with hopes of sharing the title with the only team to defeat the Valkyries, Pfeiffer. Before the match, Pfeiffer lost to Belmont Abbey, paving the way for the Valkyries to win the conference outright.



Beth Couture, an NCAA Division I women's basketball coach standout, is the new basketball coach for the Valkyries. She is the all-time winningest women's basketball coach for both Butler University and Presbyterian College.



Responding to explosive growth of the Valkyries Athletics Program, the 14,000 square-foot Marsha H. Gibbs Field House opened in September. The facility, made possible by a \$2.5 million gift from Jimmy and Marsha Gibbs, includes locker rooms, weight training, golf facilities, administrative offices and a rooftop terrace.

Inside the Academic Mind: Mirko Hall, A Musicking Man



Mu • sic • king (def.): any activity associated with music, such as composing, rehearsing, practicing, listening, dancing and critiquing

Whether dishing up antics to engage his classroom or playing a video clip to illustrate Marx's work in economics, Mirko Hall, associate professor of German studies, has been opening students' minds to the world of literature and culture since arriving at Converse in 2007. A German American from Minnesota, Hall is eclectic in more ways than one: He is a Fulbright Fellow, a former interrogator for the U.S. Army, and a Northern transplant who can sometimes be spotted in a seersucker suit or sporting purple Crocs at Converse.

A favorite across campus, Hall is perhaps better known for his dynamic (and somewhat outlandish) teaching strategies than for his research. But this award-winning intellectual historian, who once preferred black leather and the camaraderie of the disaffected youth, has found his sense of identity through music – and with it, a passion for the field of Sound Studies.

For more than a decade, Hall has undertaken a nuanced exploration of changes in German music, studying how music influences and is influenced by people's perception of their place in the world. "I love music, and I love how music can challenge us to think against the grain," says Hall. "Just as many people correlate Rock and Roll with various social revolutions, I look at similar revolutions in German music over the past 200 years. Thinking beyond the perceived boundaries of music, we can see connections between music and culture by studying times when music changed greatly – its sounds, instrumentation and styles," he says.

Musical Revolutions in German Culture: Musicking Against the Grain is the culmination of his work. In this newly published book, Hall explores the relationship between music and critical theory in Germany over the past two centuries.

Hall presents readers with case studies of German philosophers who first began tracing these connections. He delves into music of the Romantic Era, The Second Viennese School (atonal compositions), music that incorporates sounds of everyday life in early urban Berlin, and in more recent times, how synthesizer technology and the use of noise provided an outlet for cultural critique. "The different sounds open up a creative space for thinking and feeling," he says.

Mirko's innovative and effective teaching methods transcend the Converse classroom as he reaches broader audiences through *Musical Revolutions in German Culture*. And, hopefully, this fascinating window into his mind sparks a deeper appreciation and understanding of the social, political and religious implications music can have on our lives.



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Save the Date



A Timeless Tradition **Reunion Weekend** April 24-25, 2015

Converse welcomes all classes and is honoring the class years ending in 0 and 5 and the Class of 2014.

Put Converse on Your Radar for Cultural Events

Our mobile friendly website delivers information on nearly 200 public performances, exhibitions, readings and lectures each year by world-renowned artists and Converse faculty and students.



Conversations *Voices of Converse*

In celebration of our 125th anniversary, Converse recorded conversations that capture the unique voice, value and vision of our College community. The project launched during Reunion Weekend 2014 and was led by a team of student digital journalists. The resulting collection of stories span decades of friendships, life experiences and careers.



You will hear from President Fleming and her mother, from an alumna who left the US Embassy just a week before the Benghazi attack, and from identical twins who discuss the strength they gained through personal tragedy. You will hear about the days when Converse students were not allowed to wear pants, and about a romantic marriage proposal in the least romantic of places! To listen to these stories, visit:

www.converse.edu/conversations