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International Public Speaker and Spartanburg Native Katherine Jeter to Speak at Converse College's President's Leadership Forum March 9

SPARTANBURG, S.C. (February 18, 2020) – The Upstate community is invited for a free professional development and networking event on March 9. Converse's 3rd annual President's Leadership Forum will host international public speaker and Spartanburg native, Katherine F. Jeter, EdD, for a presentation and fireside chat moderated by Converse President Krista L. Newkirk at 5:30 p.m. in the Barnet Room of Montgomery Student Center. The event is free and open to the public, but reservations are required. Tickets may be reserved at www.converse.edu/PLF.

Dubbed as "the silver tornado" by her husband of 60+ years and most often identified as "faithful" and "resilient" by her friends, Katherine is as comfortable giving a motivational talk to a neighborhood garden club as she is speaking to an audience of thousands. Prior to her retirement in 1995, Katherine was an invited lecturer across the United States, in England, Europe, the Middle East, the Pacific Rim, South America, and South Africa. Whether speaking on subjects within her field of expertise in medical care, pitching a plea for living life intentionally, or encouraging folks on matters of faith, she is earnest and energetic, exuberant and pragmatic.

"We are thrilled to have Katherine Jeter join us for this year's President's Leadership Forum," said Converse President Krista L. Newkirk. "Her enthusiasm and energy are inspiring, and we look forward to having her share how her passions for cycling and adventure demonstrate her desire to make life matter regardless of age."

In recent years, Katherine has marked significant (and not so significant) birthdays with physical achievements. On her 70th birthday she cycled 70 miles to raise \$70,000 for her two favorite charities. Two years later, in the spring of 2011, she cycled 3100 miles from San Diego, CA to St. Augustine, FL. She raised \$219,000 for the Wound Ostomy Continence Nurses Society's Scholarship Fund and says that the memories of that journey continue to add dazzle and direction to each day. To mark her 75th birthday, in September 2013, she and a team of 9 others summited Mt. Kilimanjaro in East Africa, an elevation of 19,341 feet. For her 80th birthday she and a group of friends cycled the 444-mile Natchez Trace to raise \$80,000 for globalbike, a non-profit organization that provides bicycles to women in Tanzania to support their businesses and provide easier access to health care. Staying fit and making life matter are her passions and priority.

Converse's President's Leadership Forum brings to campus inspiring and engaging national and global leaders to interact with students and the Upstate community and to present on leadership topics. The President's Leadership Forum is one of several initiatives Converse undertakes to build stronger partnerships with the Upstate business community, and to serve as a resource both in terms of professional and workforce development.

Since joining Converse in 2016, President Krista Newkirk has sought opportunities to learn about workforce development needs from the Upstate area business community. As a member of the OneSpartanburg Talent Action Team, she helped to lead the formation of a formal framework for the engagement of the leading employers and colleges to discuss unmet workforce needs, technical skills, behavioral competency gaps, and professional development needs that colleges may provide for area employers and ways to provide better work development opportunities for students.

About Converse College

Converse was founded in 1889 by citizens of Spartanburg, SC who aimed to create an educational experience that enables women "to see clearly, decide wisely, and act justly." Effective July 1, 2021 it will acknowledge its university status under the name Converse University, and in fall 2021 it will welcome its first undergraduate co-educational incoming class. Converse is a creator of opportunity for all academically-qualified students through a personalized education that is combined with the professional and technical skills graduates need to be successful in their careers. Converse pushes beyond traditional boundaries to make a quality educational experience available to every qualified student who seeks it – both at the undergraduate and post-graduate levels. Converse College's mission is to help students develop their unique voice, a sense of value, and a vision for the future.

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