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## **Globally Recognized Litigator and Former Associate White House Counsel Karen Popp to Speak at Converse College's President's Leadership Forum March 8**

**SPARTANBURG, S.C.** (February 18, 2021) – The Upstate community is invited for a free professional development and networking event on March 8. Converse College's 4th annual President's Leadership Forum will host international legal counsel, renowned prosecutor with the U.S. Department of Justice, and former White House counsel Karen A. Popp for a presentation and fireside chat moderated by Converse President Krista L. Newkirk.

The event will begin at 7:00 p.m. on March 8 from Twichell Auditorium at the Zimmerli Performance Center. In-person attendance is limited and COVID-19 protocols, including mask-wearing and physical distancing, will be observed. The event will also be livestreamed via Zoom and recorded for those who wish to attend the event virtually. Attendance is free and open to the public, but reservations are required for both in-person and virtual attendance. Register for the event at [www.converse.edu/PLF](http://www.converse.edu/PLF).

Karen Popp is the Global Co-Chair of Sidley Austin's White Collar: Government Litigation and Investigations group. She specializes in high-stakes matters with legal, political, and public relations components, such as global internal investigations, defense against U.S. Department of Justice, and SEC Enforcement investigations, Congressional investigations, OIG and State Attorney General actions, corporate compliance, and litigation. Popp previously served as Associate White House Counsel to President Clinton, a lawyer in the Office of Legal Counsel at the U.S. Department of Justice, and an Assistant U.S. Attorney in New York where she prosecuted five high-profile mafia family cases, including the Gambino, Luchese, Colombo, Genovese, and Bonanno families. A frequent speaker at national conferences and before various other groups, Popp has provided legal commentary on CNN, Fox News, and NPR, and served as a consultant on the television show *The West Wing*.

"I am honored to welcome Karen Popp as our speaker this year for the President's Leadership Forum," said Converse President Krista L. Newkirk. "Her transformative leadership in the area of government litigation and investigations is an inspiration for women who aspire to successfully pursue a historically predominantly male career path. Karen has made her mark shattering glass ceilings, including being elected as the first female student body president in the University of North Carolina system."

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Popp represents clients across a host of industries and often in crisis management situations. Her clients range from major corporations to prominent business, political, and sports figures. She has been retained to conduct confidential internal investigations in more than 70 countries and to defend corporations and individuals in government investigations relating to alleged FCPA and OFAC violations, securities, and financial fraud, accounting irregularities, environmental crimes, kickbacks, tax fraud, qui tams, misuse of corporate assets, false claims, antitrust, corruption, fraud, whistleblower and “Me Too” claims.

Repeatedly recognized for her work, Popp has received accolades from publications such as *The Legal 500 US*, *Benchmark Litigation*, and *Global Investigation Review*. *Washingtonian* magazine has repeatedly included Popp in its roster of “Top Lawyers in Washington” for Criminal Defense — White Collar, and she has been recognized yearly by *The Best Lawyers in America* in Criminal Defense: White-Collar and Commercial Litigation. Popp has been named for several years to the *Top 250 Women in Litigation*, a publication honoring the achievements of female lawyers in litigation practices in the United States and has been named by *Super Lawyers* magazine as one of the Top 100 lawyers in Washington, a recognition based on a vote of peers.

The recipient of the “First Annual Transformative Leadership Award” given by *InsideCounsel Magazine* in 2010, Popp also was the 2006 recipient of the “Star of the Bar” award by the Women’s Bar Association of the District of Columbia. She received the “Thurgood Marshall Award” given by the New York City Bar Association and was the first recipient of the “Laurie A. Miller Leadership Award” for the Advancement of Women in White Collar Defense. Popp also received the first-ever “GIR Award” for Services to Diversity. Popp received an honorary doctorate degree from Converse in May 2020, but because of the pandemic was unable to present her commencement address at that time.

Popp graduated *cum laude* from the University of North Carolina School of Law, where she served as an editor on the *North Carolina Law Review* and was a member of the Order of the Coif. Upon graduation from law school, she clerked for the Honorable Sam J. Ervin III of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit. Popp received her undergraduate degree from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, where she graduated *cum laude* and thereafter studied law at Oxford University before attending UNC School of Law.

#### ***About Converse College’s President’s Leadership Forum***

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.

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***About Converse College***

Converse empowers students to become transformative leaders who see clearly, decide wisely, and act justly. Converse was founded in 1889 by citizens of Spartanburg, SC who aimed to create an educational experience for women, and in fall 2020 it welcomed its first undergraduate co-educational incoming class. Converse students experience deep scholarship, transformative mentorship, experiential learning, and wonderful support for and belief in each other. Through this unique formula, Converse is a creator of opportunity for its students through a personalized education that also includes the professional and technical skills graduates need to be successful in their careers. Effective July 1, 2021 Converse will acknowledge its university status under the name Converse University.

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