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Converse College Receives \$1 Million Gift to Support Converse Athletics

SPARTANBURG, S.C. (April 23, 2021) – Converse College has received a gift of \$1 million to support Converse athletics. The gift from Agnes Binder Weisiger '63 and her husband Edward I. Weisiger will fund the turfing of the College's soccer and lacrosse field and the installation of a track around the field. Once turfed, the field will also be home to the Valkyries field hockey team.

“Through the generosity of donors, we further the reach of Converse's distinctive educational experience and programming,” said Krista L. Newkirk, Converse president. “The Weisigers have been champions for Converse College and our athletics programs, and their generosity has allowed Converse student-athletes to experience world-class facilities and be recognized for their outstanding academic excellence, student leadership and service, and competitive intercollegiate athletics. Such generosity allows Converse to remain focused on providing a transformative education and experience for our students as we prepare them to become engaged, adaptable, global citizens committed to progress within our society and the communities in which they live and work.”

In addition to supporting the Weisiger Scholar Athletes and Weisiger Cup awards, the Weisigers were lead donors for the 29,000-square-foot Weisiger Center, which houses Converse's intercollegiate basketball and volleyball courts, physical fitness training rooms, locker rooms, and coaches' offices. Student-athletes selected for the annual Weisiger awards excel academically, are engaged in leadership and service at Converse, and exhibit the core values of the College which are excellence, integrity, diversity, respect, community, exploration and progress.

The Weisiger Outstanding Scholar-Athlete award provides scholarships for outstanding students majoring in the sciences. Recipients must excel in academics, be expressly interested in the study of science, and be dedicated to playing an NCAA Division II sport. Two new recipients are chosen from the incoming class each year, for a total of up to eight scholarship recipients across the student body annually. Since 2008, twenty-five student-athletes have been awarded the Weisiger Outstanding Scholar-Athlete scholarship.

The Weisiger Cup is presented to a Converse graduating student-athlete each year at Founder's Day. Students selected for this honor have proven records of leadership and community building skills, are valuable members of the campus community and assets to their team. The recipient's name is added to a sterling silver Weisiger Cup trophy that is permanently housed in the Weisiger Center, and the recipient receives her own smaller engraved version as a keepsake. Since 2009, thirteen student-athletes have received the Weisiger Cup.

In February 2020, Spartanburg's historic women's college declared that it would add a co-educational undergraduate residential program alongside the Converse College for Women and change its name to Converse University. Converse will be launching its inaugural men's NCAA Division II teams in fall 2021, as well as a co-educational Esports program. The NCAA men's teams currently planned for the 2021-2022 academic year include basketball, cross country, soccer, tennis, and indoor and outdoor track and field. The men's teams will be in addition to the 13 NCAA Division II and IHSA women's teams currently a part of Converse's athletic team roster. Beginning in fall 2021, the Converse equestrian team (IHSA) will also be co-educational.

For more information about Converse athletics, visit www.govalkyries.com.

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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