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Converse Establishes First Generation Student Endowment in Honor of President Krista L. Newkirk

SPARTANBURG, S.C. (June 7, 2021) - In recognition and gratitude of her dynamic and visionary leadership, the Converse Board of Trustees has established a scholarship endowment in honor of President Krista L. Newkirk, 10th President of Converse College and first President of Converse University. President Newkirk will be leaving Converse in July 2021 to become the 12th President of the University of Redlands in Redlands, California.

President Newkirk was the first college graduate in her family. In their April 2021 meeting, the Trustees voted to create and provide the lead gift to the “Krista L. Newkirk Scholarship endowment” to support first-generation students like her, in perpetuity, and to provide these students with the help they need to become first-generation graduates.

“I believe that Converse owes its current and growing success to President Newkirk’s vision and leadership,” said Sandra Shearouse Morelli ’78, Converse Board of Trustees Chair. “She is an exemplar of Dexter Edgar Converse’s Founding Ideals ‘to see clearly, decide wisely, and to act justly.’ Establishing this scholarship endowment in her honor is just one way of saying thank you to President Newkirk for all that she has done for Converse.”

Over her five years at Converse, President Newkirk led the institution through difficult times with tough, necessary decisions that set Converse on a new trajectory for success. Her leadership not only improved the excellent academic foundation she inherited but also developed new organizational, cultural, and fiscal strengths that will propel Converse University forward for increased service to future generations.

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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