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Converse University Announces New 2021 - 2022 Trustees

SPARTANBURG, S.C. (October 4, 2021) – Converse University is pleased to welcome five new members to its esteemed Board of Trustees:

- Dr. B. Brant Bynum, of Spartanburg, SC, former Associate VP for Academic Affairs and Associate Professor Emeritus of Hispanic Studies at Converse;
- Rhonda T. Coker '84, of Hartsville, SC, former Managing Owner/Partner of Young Plantations Pecans;
- Katherine Colburn Fulmer '96 of Spartanburg, SC, Senior Associate at NAI Earle Furman;
- Fain Langdale McDaniel '92, of Greenville, SC, Retired Partner of KPMG LLP; and
- Louis Smith, of Spartanburg, SC, CEO of Smithworks Fine Jewelry.

Dr. B. Brant Bynum received his Ph.D. in Spanish literature from the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill in 1987, and retired in August 2018, after 30 years at Converse. At the time of his retirement, he held the position of Associate VP for Academic Affairs and the rank of Associate Professor of Spanish. His service record to Converse includes Faculty Senate President (3 years,) Ex Oficio member of the Board of Trustees, Retention Committee Chair, Tenure and Promotion Chair, Interim Chair of the Department of Art and Design, Director of Advising, Director of the Center for Student Development and Success and Member of the Search Committee that selected Dr. Jeffery Barker. Beyond Converse, Dr. Bynum has served on the boards of Hatcher Garden and the Spartanburg Art Museum, including 3 years as Board Chair, and Chair of the Chapman Cultural Center Grants Committee. Currently, he is Chair of the Chapman Cultural Center Board of Trustees. He and his wife Judy are longtime supporters of many charitable organizations in Spartanburg, the South Carolina Upstate and beyond.

Rhonda T. Coker '84 currently serves on the Board of the Kalmia Gardens of Coker University and is an active community member, volunteering in Hartsville, SC, where she currently resides. She became the Managing Owner/Partner of Young Plantations Pecans in Florence, SC and managed the business until it was sold in 2018. After moving around the US and internationally, Coker made Hartsville, SC home.

Katherine Colburn Fulmer '96 is currently a Real Estate Broker at NAI Earle Furman, the Upstate of South Carolina's largest Commercial Real Estate Brokerage and Property Management Firm. During her time at Converse, Fulmer majored in Elementary Education and was a student-athlete on the Converse Women's Tennis Team. As an alumna, Katherine was an Admissions Counselor from 1997 - 1999, and she served on the Converse Board of Visitors from 2004 - 2010. Katherine's activities and community involvement over the years include: Leadership South Carolina (Class of 2010), Pine Street School Foundation Board Member from

2012 - 2017, Spartanburg Regional Fellows Leadership Program from 2014 - 2015, Commercial Real Estate Women member from 2015 - 2017, OneSpartanburg Downtown Development Action Team in 2017, Women Giving for Spartanburg Board Member from 2017 - 2018, Mobile Meals of Spartanburg Board Member from 2017 - 2019, Spartanburg Chamber activities, Junior League member, Piedmont Area Girl Scout Council Board Member, and Spartanburg Art Museum's Art & Antique Show co-chair with Anna Converse '98.

Fain Langdale McDaniel '92 is a retired partner of KPMG LLP, where she provided audit and attest services to large multinational/global, middle market and start-up public, private and nonprofit entities. McDaniel has previously served on numerous boards, including: Sustainability Accounting Standards Board (SASB) Advisory Council, AICPA Assurance Services Executive Committee, ASEC Sustainability Task Force and Attestation Recodification Task Force of the Auditing Standards Board, University of Hawaii- School of Accountancy Advisory Board, Women Corporate Directors-Hawaii as the Founder and Co-Chair, Junior Achievement -Hawaii as the Treasurer, and Accounting & Financial Women's Alliance-Honolulu as the President.

Louis Smith is the CEO of Smithworks Fine Jewelry, a retail and manufacturing jeweler he founded in 1988 in Spartanburg, SC. He holds a Bachelor's of Arts in Accounting from Wofford College and is married to Converse Alumna, Carter Willard Smith '88. Well-known as an innovative custom jewelry designer and expert gemologist, Smith also holds a Graduate Gemologist Degree from the Gemological Institute of America, and a Certified Gemologist Degree from the American Gem Society. He served on the American Gem Society International Board of Directors from 2007-2016, where he was Board Chairman from 2014-2016, and he also served on the Board of the American Gem Society Laboratory from 2013-2016. In 2017, he chaired a search committee to fill the position for a new Executive Director for the society. Smith is currently on the Board of Directors of the Jewelers Vigilance Committee of New York City, and the Downtown Rotary Club of Spartanburg.

Converse University and the Board of Trustees would also like to extend a heartfelt thank-you to those members departing from the Board: Mary Chapman Boyd (2013-2021), Rose Montgomery Johnston (2004-2012;2013-2021, Rick Pennell (2013-2021), Christi Epps (2017-2021), and Marsha Gibbs (1999-2003;2003-2007; 2007-2001; 2011-2015; 2017-2021) Their impact has greatly contributed to a lasting legacy at Converse to endure challenges and successes ahead. Converse University is very grateful for their support and guidance over the years.

About Converse University

Converse University 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. The University encompasses the School of Humanities, Sciences, and Business; the School of the Arts; the School of Education and Graduate Studies; and the Converse College for Women. 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.

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