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American Red Cross President and CEO Gail J. McGovern to Speak at Converse University's 2022 Undergraduate Commencement on May 21

SPARTANBURG, S.C. (May 10, 2022) – American Red Cross President and CEO Gail J. McGovern will be the 2022 Undergraduate Commencement speaker at Converse University on Saturday, May 21.

McGovern joined the American Red Cross in 2008, and has taken a strong leadership role at the nation's leading emergency response and blood services organization. She was twice-recognized by Fortune magazine (in 2000 and 2001) as one of the top 50 most powerful women in corporate America.

"We are honored to have Gail McGovern as our Commencement speaker this year," said Boone Hopkins, Converse president. "Her bold influence and visionary leadership, especially during a global pandemic, has strengthened the impact of the American Red Cross and will empower and inspire our graduates as they launch from Converse as transformative leaders who see clearly, decide wisely, and act justly."

Under her direction, the Red Cross has become more effective in fulfilling its mission and is better prepared to face current and future challenges. Her transformational initiatives have led to improved financial stability and have expanded the reach of lifesaving Red Cross services. McGovern has initiated extensive modernization projects at the Red Cross. Among them are an overhaul of Red Cross IT systems and the growth of the organization's leadership in social media and mobile technologies – including the introduction of a series of free apps that put lifesaving skills at people's fingertips during emergencies.

"I am humbled to be the Commencement speaker for such a collaborative and forward-thinking university," said Gail McGovern. "Converse's wonderful culture of creativity, service, and innovation is working to educate and transform the next generation of American leaders, and I am delighted for the opportunity to recognize and celebrate this year's graduating students."

During her tenure, McGovern has overseen the American Red Cross response to multiple high-profile disasters across the country and around the world, including Hurricane Sandy in 2012, Hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria in 2017, as well as the multitude of tornadoes, hurricanes, floods, wildfires, home fires and other local disasters that affect our country each year.

Prior to joining the Red Cross, McGovern was a faculty member at the Harvard Business School and earlier had served as president of Fidelity Personal Investments, a unit of Fidelity Investments. She was also executive vice president at AT&T for the Consumer Markets Division, the company's largest business unit, and was responsible for its \$26 billion residential long-distance service.

She earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from Johns Hopkins University and an MBA from Columbia University, and has since been recognized as alumna of the year from both universities.

McGovern is currently a member of the board of trustees for Johns Hopkins Medicine. She also serves on the board of directors of DTE Energy and PayPal.

Converse University's 2022 Undergraduate Commencement ceremony will take place at 9:30 A.M. on Saturday, May 22 in Twichell Auditorium at the Zimmerli Performance Center on Converse's main campus in Spartanburg. In-person attendance is limited to Converse graduates and their families. Full ceremony details can be found [here](#).

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.

About the American Red Cross

The American Red Cross shelters, feeds and provides emotional support to victims of disasters; supplies about 40 percent of the nation's blood; teaches skills that save lives; provides international humanitarian aid; and supports military members and their families. The Red Cross is a not-for-profit organization that depends on volunteers and the generosity of the American public to perform its mission. For more information, please visit redcross.org or cruzrojaamericana.org, or visit us on Twitter at [@RedCross](https://twitter.com/RedCross).

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