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Converse University to Install its Twelfth President, Boone J. Hopkins, Ph.D.

SPARTANBURG, S.C. – On Friday, April 21, 2023, Converse University will celebrate the investiture of its twelfth president, Boone J. Hopkins, at 10:30 a.m. on campus in Zimmerli Performance Center’s Twichell Auditorium.

The inauguration ceremony will feature a processional including three past presidents of Converse and delegates from more than 47 colleges and universities across the country, an address by President Hopkins, and greetings from regional, state, and local leaders. Providing formal greetings are Dr. Elizabeth (Betsy) Fleming, past president of Converse College; Max Hyde, Jr., representative for the thirty-second district of South Carolina, and Jerome Rice, mayor of the city of Spartanburg, South Carolina. The ceremony will also include unique celebratory commissions honoring President Hopkins. [View the Inauguration program here.](#)

“Dr. Hopkins, like those before him, brings the passion, vision, and commitment needed for this next chapter in Converse’s story,” said Sandra Shearouse Morelli ’78, chair of the Converse Board of Trustees. “He is a very special leader, and I am truly excited about the University’s positive momentum and what the future holds for Converse’s vibrant community.”

Joining Converse more than a decade ago, Dr. Hopkins’ experience and success as a campus leader has prepared him well to advance the mission of the institution. An empathetic and creative leader, Dr. Hopkins also brings to the Office of the President the passion, vision, and commitment needed to authentically lead Converse toward a brighter future.

“Dr. Hopkins, along with his wife Chandra, embody leaders who simultaneously and successfully embrace Converse’s rich past as a women’s college while celebrating our vibrant future,” said Laura Chappel Bauknight ’87, co-chair of the presidential search committee. “Together, they will continue to enrich and preserve the close community Converse has always been. They will hold true to our dedication to empowering and nurturing students, as they advance a culture of belonging and collaboration that ignites creativity, innovation, and transformation.”

Following the inauguration ceremony, additional celebratory events will include a Luncheon on the Lawn honoring President Hopkins and recognizing Founders Day at Converse – the day on which the college was founded in 1889 by Dexter Edgar Converse.

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About Boone J. Hopkins, Ph.D.

Boone J. Hopkins, Ph.D. was announced as the twelfth president of Converse on February 25, 2022, by the Converse University Board of Trustees. Dr. Hopkins has been a dedicated member of the Converse community since 2012.

Originally from Gainesville, Georgia, Dr. Hopkins is a proud Red Elephant from Gainesville High School. He experienced an innovative undergraduate liberal-arts education through a unique partnership between Brenau University, a historic women's college, and Gainesville State College, a two-year state institution now known as the University of North Georgia. After completing a bachelor's degree, Dr. Hopkins received his MFA in Directing and Acting Pedagogy from Virginia Commonwealth University followed by a Ph.D. in Theatre Studies from the University of Kansas. Dr. Hopkins moved to Spartanburg in 2012 to join Converse as an Assistant Professor of Theatre. In addition to directing plays and musicals at Converse including *Legally Blonde: the Musical*, *Twelfth Night*, *Cabaret*, *The Wolves*, and *Godspell*, Dr. Hopkins has served in numerous leadership capacities including: Chair of the Department of Theatre & Dance, Dean of the School of the Arts, Senior Associate Provost for Student Success, Interim Provost, and Interim President.

Dr. Hopkins delights in helping those with whom he collaborates reach new heights and achieve excellence. In parallel with his leadership work for Converse, Dr. Hopkins brings his love of empowering others and impacting his community for good through his work in Spartanburg on the Board of the Chapman Cultural Center, as a member of the Ten at the Top Board to support economic development in the Upstate, and as a member of the Integrated Planning Advisory Group for the Spartanburg Academic Movement. Dr. Hopkins is a member of Trinity United Methodist Church and serves as an assistant basketball coach for the Advent Episcopal first and second grade teams. President Hopkins is married to Dr. Chandra Owenby Hopkins, Dean of Converse College for Women, and they have two children: Owen (9) and Jack (7).

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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