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CONVERSE

As we welcome the renewed energy of Spring, this issue of Converse Magazine highlights the transformative contributions of our community and celebrates the connections that drive the future of our beloved campus forward. We hope you enjoy engaging with our **programs**, **places**, and **people**!

Spring 2024

Raclin Gift Makes History



Lifelong supporter of higher education and former Converse first lady Ernestine Melvin Morris Carmichael Raclin (1927-2023) further cemented her legacy at Converse with a generous estate gift of \$10.3 million.

This planned gift is the largest legacy gift and the second largest single gift in Converse's history.

Bearing the name of Raclin and her former husband, Converse's fourth President, Dr. O.C. "Mike" Carmichael, Jr. is our beloved Carmichael Hall. A staunch supporter of women's colleges, Ernestine valued a liberal arts education for women and devoted her life to philanthropic endeavors.

Raclin's gift will be used to invest in the future of Converse's people, places and programs. "We are incredibly grateful for the life and legacy of Ernestine Raclin," President Hopkins shared. "Her dedication to higher education, her philanthropic spirit, and her love of Converse inspired many and will continue to do so. The impact of this generous gift will be felt for years to come on our campus."

Scan the QR code on the back to learn more about Ernestine's legacy and how Converse plans to honor her contributions.



Converse Joins Movement 2030

Converse is one of 30 business, university, and nonprofit partners included in the Spartanburg Academic Movement's newest philanthropic endeavor, Movement 2030. As a partner in this investment, Converse has been entrusted with more than \$1 million in philanthropic funds, including a direct award from the Spartanburg Academic Movement and an impactful sub-award from OneSpartanburg.

Converse is honored to be a trusted partner in this effort. "With these funds," President Hopkins said, "Converse will focus on advancing economic mobility and career readiness by increasing adult re-engagement and degree completion and expanding services and support to veterans -- all helping Spartanburg be a community where everyone thrives."

Movement 2030 is streamlining critical resources and existing efforts around school readiness, postsecondary attainment, and place-based programs in under-invested communities. These funds will support Converse's goal of equipping students to become transformational, adaptable, and responsive leaders.



Snap for the full experience.

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Welcome to the New Converse Magazine

We hope you are enjoying the exciting evolution of Converse Magazine in its new format! Please be sure to scan the QR code or visit converse.edu/magazine to get the full experience. Explore photo galleries, videos, expansions of the stories you read here, and bonus content highlighting what our campus community is up to!

CONVERSE

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Revitalized Reunion Continues to Celebrate Alumni Memories



We are just a few weeks away from Reunion 2024! This year’s event returns to April to coincide with our annual Founder’s Day celebration. All Converse alumni are invited to join us on April 19-20, 2024, to reunite with old friends and make new ones.

Along with a new date for Reunion comes a fresh face in Alumni Relations, but not a stranger to Converse. Andrea Weatherman Kikkert ‘05, Director of Alumni Relations, is excited about the new possibilities and nostalgia that Reunion Weekend will bring. “I’m really looking forward to seeing alumni on campus again WITH faculty, staff, and current students,” Kikkert shared. “This is possible because of returning the event to Founder’s Day Weekend. We’re going to have a great time celebrating the class of 1974 and their Golden Reunion, the Class of 1999 and their Silver Reunion, our alumni achievement awards winners, and winner of the ‘It’s a Class Act’ giving competition!”

“We also have sought to make the event more accessible by providing the option of either paying for a full package or selecting individual events a la carte for registration,” says Kikkert. Options for accommodations can be found at the Spartanburg Marriott and the AC Marriott, where we have a group rate. Please indicate you are with the Converse Reunion when making your reservation.

Take a look at all of the exciting events we have planned, register to attend and get a sneak peek at who else is coming at converse.edu/alumni/reunion/.



May Day Weekend: A Family and Friends Celebration

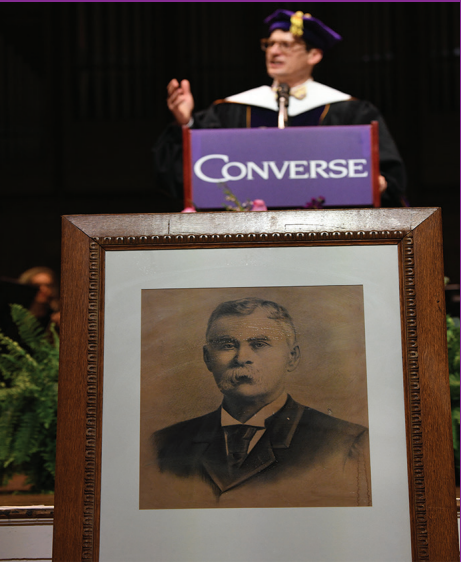
Join us May 3-4, 2024, as we celebrate May Day Weekend! This event is perfect for parents and friends to visit their students and experience a campus community that is like no other. Guests will participate in some of Converse’s richest traditions and celebrations. Events include dinner in Gee, a Valkyrie Fun Run, and an opportunity to unwind with our President and Provost. See more details and register to attend at converse.edu/familyweekend.



Founder’s Day Honors Tradition and Community

Converse will host one of its fondest traditions, Founder’s Day, on April 19, 2024, at 11:30 am in Twichell Auditorium. In observance of Dexter Edgar Converse’s birthday, this event celebrates our seniors and honors our Founder’s ideal to “see clearly, decide wisely, and act justly.”

The ceremony will begin with a processional of the senior class, faculty, and platform party and will be filled with inspiring words, gratitude, and the recognition of several outstanding members of the Converse community - including our newest Golden Club inductees, the Class of 1974. Immediately following the ceremony, all attendees are invited to lunch on the lawn and to enjoy Dexter Edgar Converse’s favorite dessert - strawberries and cream!



“Our athletic programs focus on our students – on and off the field – so that they reach their full potential here at Converse and in life.”
– Jenn Bell

Future of Valkyrie Athletics Bright with Bell

Coming to Converse for Jenn Bell was a homecoming after years of experience in collegiate athletics. When Bell was named Converse’s newest athletic director, she had long proven her worth with her administrative and coaching work. Upon her arrival in 2018, Converse was a single-gender campus and experienced the transition from an all-female to a co-ed program. Under Bell’s leadership, she added six male sports, Esports, and a Spirit Squad to the growing list of Converse athletics, which now offers 21 programs.

Just in the past year, Bell was nominated for the NCAA Division II 50th Anniversary Gold Winner, named Division II Nike Executive of the Year by Women Leaders in Sports, and appointed as third Vice President of the D2 Athletic Directors Association. In March, she received recognition as the NACDA Cushman & Wakefield Athletic Director of the Year for NCAA Division II.

Special Initiatives Support Prosperity

In an effort to support our Strategic Vision Plan and to enhance our people, places, and programs, Converse introduced Special Initiatives funding. Contributions to these funds support the School of the Arts, the Converse College for Women, and Athletics. Gifts to these initiatives can help fund areas such as our new dance major, expansion of athletic facilities to further support our ever-growing student-athlete population, creating student leadership retreats, and ultimately positioning our students to propel into fruitful careers and make a positive impact within their communities. Contact the Philanthropy Office or visit converse.edu/giving to learn more.

