



**OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT**

580 East Main Street  
Spartanburg, SC 29302-1931  
direct 864.596.9050  
fax 864.596.9223  
[www.converse.edu](http://www.converse.edu)

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The Honorable Nikki R. Haley  
Office of the Governor  
1205 Pendleton Street  
Columbia, SC 29201

Dear Governor Haley,

Having been inspired by your extraordinary leadership and your commitment to advancing the State of South Carolina, it is with great admiration that I write on behalf of the Class of 2017 at Converse College to invite you to serve as our commencement speaker. The invitation includes your participating in the commencement exercises and delivering a brief address, approximately 15 minutes, directed towards our graduating seniors.

As a time when women are being summoned to lead as never before, our students are eager to hear from role models and change agents like you who will foster their own dreams for the future. The Class of 2017 is especially inspired by women who have struggled with difficult challenges and who despite such obstacles, possess the confidence, competence and courage to stand up and affect positive change in the world. Your voice would be truly inspiring to our graduates—over 30% of whom are the first in their families to earn a college degree.

Founded in 1889 as a single-gender institution to provide women access to a college education, Converse College of Spartanburg, South Carolina maintains its focused commitment to the personal and professional advancement of women. Our graduates include the first and only South Carolinian to win a Pulitzer Prize in Literature; a pioneering suffragist who marched on Washington, D.C. to help American women gain the right to vote; elected public representatives; community activists; international human rights advocates; lawyers; doctors; educators; mothers; sisters; and wives - all of whom believe in education's transformative power to make a difference in workplaces, communities and nations all over the world. We have hosted many notable dignitaries and leaders throughout our 125 year history. Enclosed please find additional materials about Converse College.

Commencement is scheduled for 9:30 a.m. on May 20, and your participation in this special day will be exciting news for the entire Converse Community. I will contact you in early-February to discuss further this invitation. However, should you wish to be in touch with me, please feel free to contact me at 864-596-9050 or [klnewkirk@converse.edu](mailto:klnewkirk@converse.edu). Please know how truly excited the Converse Board of Trustees, faculty, and the Class of 2017 would be to welcome you to the College. It promises to be a milestone in our history.

Yours sincerely,

Krista L. Newkirk, J.D.  
President