

Interview Questions for Alumnae (Swap out UVA when interviewing non-UVA women)

1. Marva Jo
2. Tell us a few things about yourself (family, job, things that bring you joy).
 - a. From Maryland
 - b. 2 daughters went to Spellman 23 25
 - c. Daughters bring joy
 - d. New puppy Bentley brings joy
 - e. Attorney and private practice
 - i. Lobbying land use
 - ii. Non-profits
 - iii. Small women minority own business
 - iv. Serve as chair of leadership prince Georges
 - v. Community service brings joy
 - vi. Sorority
 - vii. Links incorporated
3. What is your UVA story?
 - a. How did you decide to come to UVA?
 - i. Family friend who kept talking about it
 - ii. Came and visited spring fling
 - b. What did you do when you were a student at UVA?
 - i. Very active; bridge a gap between African americans and larger university
 1. Chairperson for university union
 2. RA, student government association, president of black law student association, worked at Luther B Jackson House,

3. Pre-law association, created it, Oliver W Hill
 4. Brought researchers for Sally Hemmings story
 - ii. Were women encouraged or discouraged to join extracurriculars?
 1. Idk that I felt like they were either, I felt like it was on student initiative
 - iii. Were some more welcoming than others?
 1. Sorority was a haven for African American women
 2. White males had a system, women and African Americans didn't have that support system
 - a. Black women didn't have a sorority house they needed a support network
 - iv. Greek life experience?
 1. Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority incorporated
4. What is your favorite UVA memory?
 - a. Oliver hill, becoming member of sorority, helped bring the first African American professor in the law school,
 - b. Worst moment:
 - i. Roommate who would ask questions about black people like if she could swim
 - ii. Parents moved her out because they didn't want to touch the same door knob
 - iii. Told "not like other black people"
 - iv. Car slowed down while she was walking to a party, and called her the n word, and drove off
 - v. On bus, drunk guys and showed off, one girl very scared and they were saying bad things to them
5. What was a transformative moment for you at UVA?

- a. Became isolated on campus, she wanted to go downtown to get food, cried because she saw people who weren't students, didn't realize how much she missed being part of the community, made her get involved within the school and outside of the school
 - b. She was in the dining hall, they had a program where if you gave up meat for a week they would donate to a charity, she has now given up all meat since then except for poultry
 - c. At the women's shelter, a psychologist was telling a story about her husband beating her, she said she was going to go back to him and the only reason she left is because her kids saw her naked and bleeding from the head,
 - i. Made her realize to always find good in everything because things can always be worse
6. What was the most challenging thing about UVA?
- a. Racism
 - i. Experience with professor with a question that asked "are blacks inferior to whites"
 - ii. Received bad grade on essay because she said they were not, he told her she'd only get a good grade if she would have argued that blacks were inferior
 - b. Segmentation of the school
 - i. How do you interact with everyone with all the cliques
7. Tell us about a woman/women at UVA who inspires you – now, or during your time on Grounds.
- a. Professor Ravenell, breaking new ground, brilliant and had to deal with a lot of disrespect and paving the way for others
 - b. All the women at the university in general

- c. What relationships did you form with other women and did you find it easy to make those connections?
 - i. Great women friends
 - ii. Relationship with women on campus was fantastic because she is very outgoing
 - d. What was the presence of women's groups and movements on campus like?
 - i. More racial side then women side, did not see the women piece as much as you did racial piece
 - ii. When they were trying to get first woman at law school, tension because women's groups wanted a woman, black individuals wanted a black woman
 - e. How many courses did you take at UVA that were taught by female professors? Could you talk a little about the courses they taught and the kind of diversity that the courses and the prof(s) represented?
 - i. Doesn't think she had a female professor at all besides the one at the law school
8. What were your experiences with sexism or misogyny on Grounds?
- a. Hard to tell because she didn't know if the disrespect was because of her being black or a woman
 - b. The number of rapes was high on campus though
9. Was there an open LGBTQ+ presence when you went to UVA?
- a. No open LGTQ presence at all
10. Did you feel pressured to go into a certain field or avoid a certain field during your time in college?
- a. No, She knew by fifth grade that she wanted to be a lawyer, nothing was going to prevent that
 - b. Did you notice a disparity in the population of men and women in your major?

- i. No, there were a good amount of women going through the law program, it was definitely white male dominated in total though
 - c. Do you know of any efforts your institution has made since you graduated to make their classes more inclusive?
 - i. Feel like it has done less, commitment is not where it should be, ability to get scholarships has gone down, costs have gone up
 - ii. Thinks more effort should be made to make sure there is more interaction and welcoming of students
 - iii. Thinks minorities and women should be able to be more a part of the decision-making processes

11. What was relationship/hookup culture during your time at UVA?

- a. Everybody was hooking up
- b. Freedom, mixed dorms

12. Was there any talk about consent and respect on campus? If so, do you think it was thorough/helpful?

- a. They only had the discussions when someone was raped, it was a reactive discussion not preventative

13. What was your journey after leaving UVA?

- a. Great journey, worked for public defender service, worked for the hill, continued to be very active in everything she did there,
- b. UVA gives you that assumption that you are smart even if you are not, people act different when they know you've been there

14. Is there something you learned at UVA that you apply to your life now?

- a. Never accept NO, UVA affirmed it

- b. Can't let anyone stop you, if you want it you go for it
- c. Ability to interact with a wide variety of people, and do well with it, with people from all walks of life

15. What does the UVA alumnae community mean to you? How have fellow alumnae affected your life/career/journey?

- a. Everything, I support it, I come back
- b. Gets awards for bringing alumnae back
- c. Certain times in life it is more significant than others

16. In your opinion, what is the legacy of women at UVA?

- a. Black female experience/legacy
 - i. We can do it
 - ii. We belong
 - iii. We made a difference
 - iv. We have a lot to offer, the school would be terrible without women
 - 1. This shows in the success of the women who have come through there

17. If you could impart a piece of advice to a female student on Grounds today, what would you tell her?

- a. Sometimes when things happen we blame it on yourself
 - i. But sometimes one is the victim of the circumstance
 - ii. Don't blame yourself but understand the dynamics around you
 - iii. Never lose faith in yourself, you earned the right to be there and deserve to be there
 - iv. Loving yourself and being there for yourself
 - v. Standing up for yourself and other women

To see examples of responses to these questions go to <https://retolduva.com/alumnae/alumnae-profiles/>

To see examples of self-submitted stories on the [Retold Share Your Story platform](#) go to <https://virginia.brightcrowd.com/retold/sign-in/> The access code is **retolduva**