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Sadie: Okay, so the first question is just generally tell us a few things about yourself. So your family, your job, things that bring you joy.

Valerie: Okay, um, in two days I'm going to turn 68, I married my high school sweetheart. We met at Langley. We have three wonderful children, the eldest is a girl. She's 43 now. And then her sister's 41, and my son is 35. They're all married, and I have five grandchildren, and one on the way in San Francisco which breaks my heart that they're so far away, but oh well. Um, let's see, what brings me joy. Seeing those grandchildren. Being able to even at a distance, it's good. Three of them are girls that live in Arlington, and several nights a week, we do Facetime and either they read to me or I read to them, so it's you know it's bedtime so that's very special. Just appreciation for health too, my husband just had a stem cell transplant. He's had a form of blood cancer for a number of years and it progressed to where it would have been fatal in a couple of years if he hadn't had this procedure so everything's kind of dropped into place his brother was a perfect match. There's an incredibly well known stem cell transplant center right here at UVA, we live 10 minutes away. And he had it in the first of December, which is called a Re-Birthday. So, yeah, all those things bring me joy.

S: Okay, so the next question is, what is your UVA story, so how did you decide to go to UVA, and then what did you do when you were a student there?

V: Um, my senior year in high school I did apply to UVA, but didn't get in. I ended up going to Skidmore, which is in Saratoga Springs, New York, and had a year there. That was fabulous. I can remember getting a letter from my dad one day who said could you please reapply to UVA to transfer because this \$4,000 a year tuition is killing me in Skidmore, and it was \$1,800 at UVA, that gives you an idea of inflation and increase in tuition costs. So I happily did because that boyfriend I was telling you about was at UNC, so it's much closer and we were able to see each other a lot second year. And then he ended up transferring to UVA, third year. So, and then we got married about a month after graduation. Um at UVA, something that was monumental for me was going to my sister's graduation. She claims she was in the first class of women graduates because she graduated in '72. And she had gone to Sweet Briar. And as soon as women were allowed to apply to UVA she did so she came in as a third year, and graduated in '72 and I went to her graduation. I can remember president Shannon saying wonderful things about.. oh, the med students and the nurses and you know what great careers they're going to have and then for the College he said welcome to the educated public. And I sort of took that as oh gosh, you know, what would I do if I continue with a liberal arts education, knowing that my husband, future husband, was going to plan to go to grad school and, you know what, I'd need a job. And we went to lunch that day with a lot of my sister's classmates and one was a history major and one was an art major and I said what are you going to do and they said waitress. And I said well who does have jobs when they graduate and they said the nurses so I applied to the nursing program. And it was a good decision. It was hard because second year I had to take 18

credits in order to get the prerequisites for nursing school. At the time, most of the nurses transferred in after their third year from other schools, it was rare for nurses to come in as college students the first two years. Now it's different, they apply to nursing school as first years. So I had to get all these, you know anatomy, physiology, microbiology, chemistry, and it just, just about killed me but I did it. I was glad I did. And then the nursing program was wonderful, I made a lot of great friends that I still stay very close with. You know, football games were always great. Easters-- Mad Bowl, the fraternities would turn their hoses on it and it would just be solid mud. Green alcohol was everywhere, one of my roommate's boyfriends had these jugs of white liquid. It was pretty deadly. I think they got it from moonshiners in the hills. What else. Oh, a friend convinced me to go into cheerleading, so I did that my third year, which was great because we got to go to all the games, had an excellent viewpoint of what was going on on the field but I decided not to do it fourth year. Oh, some differences I wanted to point out. One thing was that there was no bus system. Everybody walked everywhere. So you had to make sure you had enough time to get across grounds to your classes. I lived in an apartment my third year that was over by Foods of All Nations. And the nursing school is diagonally across Grounds on the opposite side so I learned a lot of shortcuts, you know, but it was fun to cross over the Lawn everyday, getting to the corner I needed to get to. You know, it was interesting for me, because second year when I came in they put me in Mallet, you know, by Brown College. So they put me in with two College students, and one was an art major and the other was pre-med. And they were dear dear friends right away. And then like I say, third year is when most of the nursing students came to Grounds. And they were all in McKim. So, third year I didn't want to go into McKim, I wanted to stay with my friends. So that's when we got this apartment over near Foods of All Nations, and it was good and bad for me because I didn't really connect that well with all the nursing students who were, you know, all together in the same dorm. But then fourth year, they closed down McKim, turned it into administrative buildings, and the nursing dorm was brand new and it was the tall building at the end of Brandon Avenue, that's now called Bice I think. And so we were the first ones in there fourth year and I roomed with nursing students. So that was, that was fun to have,

S: Did you join any extracurriculars, and did you notice that women were encouraged or discouraged to join certain extracurriculars? Were some more welcoming to women than others?

V: Um, I did play on an intramural softball team so that was all women. As far as any kind of discrimination of not being included in anything. I didn't experience any of it, because I was mostly around nurses. The, the men who had come in with that class right before me as first years, we're all used to, you know, coed school so there was no, um, no animosity within. My sister had a different situation where, you know, they were all still wearing coats and ties. Which was, was a different experience than mine. But no it was it was easy to join whatever you wanted. I wasn't at all interested in a sorority because I think there was one at the time, maybe two, they just hadn't gotten up and going.

S: What is your favorite UVA memory?

V: Um, I think it was that same, you know, one of the Easter's weekends when it was just wild and crazy on Rugby Road and streaking was popular at the time. And Rugby was just mobbed with students, and there was a police car coming from the north down, down the South toward Mad Bowl right around one of the fraternities that was up there, and it was having to move so slowly through the crowd and this guy with nothing on got on top of the police car and started unscrewing the lights. It was totally crazy I could not believe he was doing it. So that's a vivid memory.

S: What was a transformative moment for you at UVA?

V: Taking my last exam. I was so relieved when I realized I didn't have to take any more classes.

It really was a huge relief because I studied hard and I studied in the stacks that are now demolished. But that's, that's most of my studying. The stacks needed to go. I was not sad to see the cranes pull those down. Yeah, transformative moment. I think the other one was my sister's graduation. You know, that kinda changed my life and my course of direction.

S: What was the most challenging thing about UVA?

V: I think the curriculum at the nursing school, it was tough. Um, you begin to realize that not only did you need to understand, you know all the technological parts of nursing and medicine. You know pharmacology and disease process, and you know just the, the minute by minute care that you gave patients, but also how important a psychological connection with those patients was and that you needed to develop that too, and how important compassion was for their well being. So all that was totally encouraged at the school. Just to be an all around good nurse but it was, it was challenging to put all that together.

S: Tell us about a woman or women at UVA who inspires you now or during your time there.

V: During my time there was a woman named Betty Norris, and she was one of the nursing instructors and she was just so kind and so gentle and so understanding. I can remember one time watching her put lotion on a patient's feet. And she said this is one of the treatments that is so easily neglected, because there's so much else that needs to be done, and this is, you know, this patient's feet were dry and you know how good it feels to have a foot massage! She just did something very simple that was important to the patient and not a part of the standard nursing care. And then it was interesting because after we graduated and moved to Chicago, where my husband was in grad school, we got a solicitation from UVA because Betty Norris had died, and that they were starting a fund for her. I may have these, she may have died later but anyway I was just inspired to give, and so my first check to UVA was for \$10 because that's all I could afford.

S: What relationships did you form with other women and did you find it easy to make those connections?

V: Yes. There's two friends that I was telling you about first, you know, we still, they used to come here every, at least once a year for football or basketball games and stay with us, they both live in Pennsylvania, different towns. So we stayed close to them. They were very welcoming to me as a transfer. Like I say we stayed close and the nursing friends, for example we, there were three of them who had been coming here every year, the three of us are all in the Raven Society. And there's a banquet every year. So, you know, that was always fun to have a sleepover here at the house and reconnect with them, but they're all remarkable women, and I just feel blessed that we've maintained this this friendship and see them on Facebook or Instagram all the time so we stay connected and they, they were all compassionate, caring people I was lucky to, to make their friendships.

S: What was the presence of women's groups and movements on campus if there were any?

V: Women's movements... I can't think of any. Nothing stands out.

S: Um, how many courses did you take that were taught by female professors?

V: Second year they were all men, you know, that was the anatomy and physiology and microbiology and chemistry. Oh I took psych too. None of them were women. And then it was the complete opposite in nursing school, there were no men. Yeah, there were no men in our class. Now there's a lot, lot more men are in nursing.

S: What were your experiences with sexism or misogyny on Grounds?

V: Nothing that I can remember. Nothing stands out.

S: Was there an open LGBTQ+ presence when you went to UVA?

V: Not at all. I didn't know any gay or lesbian or trans. Anybody. No.

S: Did you feel pressured to go into a certain field or to avoid a certain field during your time in college?

V: Well, yeah. I was pressured to have a job when I came out. So, I was pressured to go into nursing, in, in a way, but very grateful that that happened. Oh, I do have a regret though because that art major friend of mine had these gorgeous books that she had to look at, you know all the Impressionist paintings and just that was her studying was looking at this fabulous artwork so. I realized that I was giving up a liberal arts education. I couldn't couldn't fit in art history with all that I was doing. So, I'm afraid I have not followed Jefferson's idea of continuing your education I could have easily taken umpteen art history classes by now but haven't.

S: What was the kind of relationship culture during your time at UVA, so were there casual relationships, dating, etc?

V: Um, there was not so much going on in groups, as I think there is now, there was a lot of activity at the fraternities, that's usually where we would go on the weekends because one of my roommates boyfriends was in Sigma Nu and it goes a little wild and crazy. Another thing I remember is one of the fraternity brothers standing on the mantle and I vaguely remember that he didn't have any clothes on, but I might have that wrong. And he did a backflip off the mantle. So, that was... Sigma Nu had a reputation of being pretty wild. So, you know, in the group that I was in it was a lot of couples and, and we'd do things like play tennis with another couple on the court. Oh, one time those two roommates I was telling you about, and their boyfriends and myself and my boyfriend went to the Appalachian Trail and rented a cabin for the weekend. So we would get out of town sometimes. Um, I know a lot of partying on the corner, there was a bar called Pose. You go downstairs and, um, I have no idea what that is currently. So that was a lot of fun. I think mostly just going to the corner, to the bars on the corner.

S: Was there any talk about consent or respect on campus and if so do you think it was thorough or helpful? So conversations surrounding being respectful, asking for consent, issues of sexual assault, things like that. Like when you arrived.

V: No, there was no training in that there was no discussion of consent. I never heard of any rapes, or didn't have any friends that you know ever felt they were pressured into relationships that they didn't initiate, or you know, that were consensual, so. It was very quiet that way, you know, if it did go on, we didn't hear about it.

S: What was your journey after leaving UVA?

V: After we got married we straightaway moved to Chicago and were there for two years while my husband got his MBA. And I worked at a burn unit and a regular medical floor while I was at the University of Chicago hospitals and clinics. And then we moved to North Carolina where he got his first job. I worked in a hospital there where it was an ICU, that we rotated between neuro cardiac and surgical. So that was a good experience. That's where I had my first child, Winston Salem. And after my husband was working for RJ Reynolds' Tobacco. And he was marketing Salem cigarettes. And one day we kind of looked at each other and saying, I just took care of a guy on a trach, you know, he's had a laryngectomy because of smoking. He can't speak, and you're making cigarettes. Something wrong with this picture. Both of our families were in McLean, so Oh, he got a job up there. Took a while off, had a second child, and we were living in Reston at the time. And then later I got a job at the Washington Hospital Center. I was working weekend nights 7pm to 7am in their ICU, so that I could be with my kids all week long. Did that for a little while and then quit for a while. We eventually moved to Vienna, where we lived for 16 years before moving to McLean for a couple and then back down here. At one point, I got another job at Fairfax, which is now INOVA. And my second two children were born there. I worked in a step down ICU at that time doing part time work. Other than my career in nursing I did a lot with volunteer work. PTA, you know, Funfair chairman. We hosted children from Ireland, where you'd get one Catholic boy and one Protestant and have them for six weeks in the summer. That was fun. We did some work with a short term foster care, where, if a parent got arrested or something, we'd suddenly have a couple kids in our house for a night or two or a

week. I never did any long term care with that. I took up golf and tennis. A lot of our lives rotated around our three kids, of course, you know, soccer, lacrosse, swimming. Every weekend was taken up with games or swim needs. Yeah. Uh huh. This is all sounding familiar to you.

S: Okay, is there something you learned at UVA that you apply to your life now?

V: Yeah, I think, you know, nursing school really taught me compassion and that you kind of never know what's going on in someone else's life. You know, if someone lashes out at you or is not as friendly as you think they might be, who knows what's just happened to them. I think it's taught me patience, and that sort of small things that you can do for people have a bigger impact than you may realize. Kindness.

S: What does the UVA alumni community mean to you, so how have fellow alumni affected your life or your career?

V: I've been quite involved with the Alumni Association. First it was on an advisory board for the nursing school, and then I was on something called the Rotunda Society for several years, I think it may have been disbanded now. And I was actually the chairman of that for a one-year term. And then from there I was on the board of managers for two terms. So I have stayed in close touch with the Alumni Association, and activities, you know, with other alums, and that's been very rewarding to branch out and meet people from other classes, and to see some of the changes that occurred because when I was on the Alumni Association Board, I think there were three other women out of 15, you know, it was way lopsided, all old white men. So the three of us just made a big push and said hey guys, you know, this isn't right. And they said well we don't, we don't have good candidates to bring in so that was our goal was to find these remarkable women who were more than happy to be on the board. So during my term, we changed the, the, you know, composition of the board and brought in a lot more women. So that was, yeah, that was, that was gratifying. Still not as many as we want it you know it's, you know, that they would say, okay, we need five new people on the board so three should be women and two men but it was still like pulling teeth, but at least it was progress.

S: In your opinion, what is the legacy of women at UVA?

V: I think that the the women who come to UVA, you know not speaking for all of them of course but I think they come out as strong leaders, and people who have an interest in community, and they're intelligent, they're strong, and I know a lot of them have been so successful in business that it's quite impressive to see how much their UVA education has helped them launch into the fields that they wanted to go into.

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

V: I think it would be to reach out to others, especially those who are not in your comfort zone. Try and get to know more people of other races and cultures because I really think that your

generation is the one that I put my hope in to turn this world around because we're in such a mess. I think you all have a different awareness of that. Um, but that would be my advice.

S: Is there anything related to women's history at the university that you would like to learn more about?

V: You know, I think they've made a push to bring a lot of that to the forefront. There was a lecture at the nursing school a couple of years ago where they brought in a woman who was the first Black nursing student, and this was like in the 50s I think, and she was just remarkable, you know, and all that's kind of been brought out. There was a Black nursing student who found out about this woman, and thought her story was important, and you ever been to the lecture hall in McLeod? She was on the stage and she had on this wonderful, Beautiful suit, and she spoke so eloquently. She wasn't bitter, you know she, she was a student, just like all the other women but she was not allowed to live in the dorms. She had to find her own housing off grounds. She had to pay for it. It's things like that that make you realize that there are more hidden stories that need to come out but I think UVA has also made an effort to acknowledge enslaved people I think that new memorial is spectacular. You know, the white privilege has enabled history to be swept under the rug. And I'm really impressed with the push now that's apparent and I'm involved with another organization now that has a weekly Zoom, and it's all about, you know, do you have a Black friends or just know Black people. Acknowledging white privilege. It's not just bringing out what we're not aware of as far as the daily discrimination that Black people especially feel, but it's what to do about it. and what actions you can take to try and rectify that and, you know, first of all acknowledge it and admit that it's there.

S: What do you think the biggest difference was in terms of your experience at UVA, and what is going on now in 2021?

V: I think we were... The majority of us were just kind of trying to get through and you know, get through our studies and I feel like students now are a lot more vocal about social issues, and fairness, and political action. You know there was some of that but it didn't... Well, right before we got here, there were demonstrations on the line for, you know, anti-war. And they were vocal that way. More of an international awareness probably among the students, pushing to get things changed, pushing harder and making the administration accountable. I would say all that.