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Class of 1987

### **Interview Questions for Alumnae**

1. Tell us a few things about yourself (family, job, things that bring you joy).

Actually, when you said things that bring you joy, I'll just start with that because this is the anniversary of the sort of lockdown, at least for the D.C. area. A year ago is when school and work and everything went remote. So, it's kind of interesting timing having thought of some of the things like that, like how we're all surviving because a year ago I don't know what the answer would have been. That's interesting, I probably would have said things like travel and things that are not possible right now. So, definitely my family in terms of joy. I live in D.C. and have been in Washington, I'm not from this area, I'm from South Bend, Indiana and when I went to UVA it was a big jump. I grew up in the middle of five kids and both of my older siblings went to school in Indiana and I know I only looked at schools much further away, needing to get away from what was familiar. I'm not sure exactly how, but Virginia was my first choice and I was really happy to get there. I spent a summer, or two summers in college I guess, in DC and then I went elsewhere for law school, but also spent a summer in Washington and moved here after law school and met my husband that summer. We dated and ended up marrying and we have been here ever since. We have three kids and a dog. Doing things with them, in terms of bringing joy, but the way we can explore and do things is different now. It's definitely more cooking and reading and making things, like creating things. Not strictly speaking like I don't sew or anything specific like that, but I was in the school of architecture at Virginia and my degree was in architectural history, but I loved the time I was in the studio.

Anyway, with my kids when they were little especially, but even now, I encourage them to make cards and sign cards for people and things like that.

2. What is your UVA story?

a. How did you decide to come to UVA?

I didn't look at schools on the west coast, but I did look at schools on the east coast for some reason. So, we came and visited, my parents and I had some family friends that we visited in D.C. and then did a school tour that included like Georgetown and Virginia and several other schools that were more kind of mid-Atlantic, not anything further south. I loved the grounds, I mean I don't know, I just had a real feel for it. I didn't know I would be doing the A School, I actually transferred into it from the college. I always loved looking at the buildings in Chicago and sort of buildings and places and the place and history of Virginia was just really appealing I guess. A couple things I didn't fully appreciate about Virginia I think when I made my school choice, I didn't appreciate how southern it was. I think because of seeing it through a friends in DC perspective, it just seemed a little ways away from DC, I felt like it was worlds away really. I grew up in South Bend, which is the home of Notre Dame. Notre Dame athletics were a really big deal; my dad had tickets to football, basketball, hockey and with five kids he would always have someone to take, we went to games all the time. The difference between Notre Dame and Virginia football games, at least when I was in school. People had dates for the football games, I mean not everyone, but that was the usual thing. People dressed up for the football games, you know it was just a whole different world that I didn't fully appreciate until I got there. I think something else I didn't fully appreciate until I got there was just the fact that in '83 it had not been coed for all that long. So, even though I think the numbers by that point were roughly

50/50, kind of the legacy of that was still there. Something I've noticed a lot especially as an alum, coming back for reunions for example and now that I'm in the groove that is like the older years, they do reunions sort of like the younger years and the older years. My class is now with all the really old people. Almost every alum I meet from those older classes is a man and it's because women weren't graduating from UVA. That has been kind of a striking legacy that I guess kind of as we all get older and die off it will all be different. I also think that matters in terms of networking and has a lot of other repercussions.

- b. What did you do when you were a student at UVA?
  - i. Were women encouraged or discouraged to join extracurriculars?
  - ii. Were some more welcoming than others?
  - iii. Greek life experience?

I'll start with Greek Life because I did not join a sorority. I did rush my first year and I didn't match up or whatever. Interestingly, probably the two people who are still my best friends starting first year in Dabney Dorm had the same experience. Sororities were actually a lot smaller I think with a smaller number of women involved in them I think again because they just weren't as established. It wasn't as overwhelming a thing as it seemed to be for men. But they didn't match up either and so we kind of were just like, "Oh, tried that, whatever." One of them actually did end up joining her second year, but my other friend and I never did. I tried a bunch of stuff, I definitely remember being super excited about the fair, there was this fair at U-Hall and finding out about groups. I had played tennis all through high school pretty seriously, I wasn't a recruit or anything, but I tried out for whatever is the equivalent of the B-Team. That was a total mistake, I got really spanked on that and I didn't keep playing tennis, but I did play a lot of squash. It was not an organized extracurricular, it was just informal. I did end up joining

student council, I ran for student council one year and was on it for one year, or maybe it was two years. There were a couple other groups I was involved in, but I am not sure they're still there. There was something called the Thomas Jefferson National Affairs Study Group and we, this is pre-Internet and stuff, we would literally research issues and make appointments with people and drive up to D.C. and meet with you know somebody from the South African embassy about apartheid divestment issues or policy-maker type people or whoever we could get a hold of on Capitol Hill. We did things in the Virginia area and I did that for a couple years and I think my last year I was vice president for that group. I did study abroad my third year and that definitely makes it harder for extracurriculars in terms of maintaining involvement. I went to London through a program that was part of the School of Architecture, so it was like the University College, London. I had planned on going for my whole third year, but came back after my first semester, so that was a bit of a scramble in terms of finding housing, but it all worked out fine.

### 3. What is your favorite UVA memory?

The two that come mind are like book ends, it's funny. One is I have this memory of like first-year dorm and early on, like after the parents leave and you move in, not on the first day, but later on. They did dorm pictures and the tradition was you wear pajamas or a bath robe or something. I just remember this was the first time I felt totally okay and comfortable because for me it was such a big thing to be away from home and it just felt like this was my place. I have some really good memories of a summer I spent in Charlottesville. Because I transferred into the School of Architecture, I had to do a summer studio, or two studios actually. So, I was there in Charlottesville in the summer and it was a lot of fun. The other is graduation. It was

fantastic having everyone's family there and having the ceremony and just having the ability to get to that point. Just walking on the lawn like that, it was really a remarkable event and I was actually really sad to leave.

4. What was a transformative moment for you at UVA?

I had decided I was studying abroad for my whole third year, in London. Coming back, after deciding that was the right thing for me to do, starting in January or whatever, that just felt like a really different point because I had made that choice and wanted to be there, which I hadn't thought I would be doing at all, instead of living in London and all the things about studying abroad that I had enjoyed. That felt like a really different point for me, you know, being Charlottesville and kind of embracing it in a different way.

5. What was the most challenging thing about UVA?

Well, two things come to mind. One, and I think this has something to do with my transferring into the A-School. I did feel like, even though there was an advisor and probably whatever should have been in place was in place, I did feel a little lost early on. I didn't have a clear path if I had stayed in the college on what I wanted to do. At that point, I knew I wanted to take different women's studies classes, that's what it was called, and first semester had the intro class that was offered. So that was something I was really interested in and there wasn't like a clear path to pursue that. At the same time, my first semester first year I took intro to architectural history and that was a clearer path and I ended up going that way. Although I ended up taking a lot of women's studies classes and I couldn't officially have a concentration in it, but I did have more than 30 hours that would have counted. It was like every elective type thing in terms of

being in the A-School, I ended up taking something that would have counted toward that, but there was no way to make that official. So, that was a little challenging. Actually, the whole Greek Life thing was a little challenging. Things really did revolve around that, but it wasn't totally my cup of tea. One particular memory that came to mind when you asked about challenging was just dealing with this drunken fraternity boy calling my friend horrible names and walking home alone and the stress and I don't know, that was a social side.

6. Tell us about a woman/women at UVA who inspires you – now, or during your time on Grounds.

a. What relationships did you form with other women and did you find it easy to

make those connections?

b. What was the presence of women's groups and movements on campus like?

c. 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 remember Sharon Davie, I don't know if she's still there. She was someone I talked to on the women's studies staff. I'm trying to remember the name of the dean who was involved with student council who I also just felt like was a really big supporter, but I can't remember her name, I feel kind of bad about that. The A-School also was a little bit different. The Greek Life stuff wasn't as big a deal, partly because people were in the studio all the time, at all hours. There also were professors there that were great, it was great, it wasn't too male dominated. There was a professor Dora Wiebenson who was really amazing I remember. I remember her class really well and also just her and the way she dealt with things and dealt with the male

faculty. Architecture felt more egalitarian in that regard, in terms of professors. That was, for me, it really made a difference in terms of the field or the path I was choosing.

7. What were your experiences with sexism or misogyny on Grounds?

The most that I really remember happened more off grounds, like the fraternity parties and that sort of mindset. At least back then, there were ways to go to Fox Field or to football games, but the overarching mindset was the fraternity party mindset which was pretty sexist.

8. Was there an open LGBTQ+ presence when you went to UVA?

Well, I do remember classmates who were gay and a couple of the women's studies seminars I can think of where that came up in the discussion. There was a class called women in utopia, which was really women in dystopia, because there are no good utopian models pretty much. I think within the A-School as well. I think it definitely was open and there were people who were open about it. I can't remember more specifically.

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

- a. Did you notice a disparity in the population of men and women in your major?
- b. Do you know of any efforts your institution has made since you graduated to make their classes more inclusive?

No, I really didn't. I didn't feel pressure. I felt more like making the decision of going to the A-School seemed like a clearer path. I'm not sure if that's because of the information I was able to get, but you know talking to people it felt more open.

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

Well there definitely was one, but I don't think anyone ever called it anything like that. Yeah, I don't know. I mean the dorm I was in first year was coed, I don't think there are any more that are single sex. So, that was not in issue when someone was in someone else's room. It's such a different time. Something I remember are the Bahama parties. It was like a fraternity party when there would be some kind of drawing or something and the winners would have airline tickets to go to the Bahamas that night and you know, however many hotel days and whatever. The only time I was ever at a party like that, I remember the person who won had just met the woman he was taking that night at the party. They literally hooked up and then he was taking her to the Bahamas. That might be a little bit of an extreme example.

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

You know, it wouldn't have been talked about like that. There definitely was talk about date rape and there was a lot of emphasis on not walking home by yourself after a party, but it was really limited in that respect. I don't remember any discussion about consent for example. But I guess talking about date rape there was the recognition that it can happen, for what that's worth.

12. What was your journey after leaving UVA?

Well, I did not have a plan quite frankly on what I was going to do. I had a friend, actually someone I had gotten to know that summer when I was taking studio, who graduated a year ahead of me and worked for an architect in Princeton named Michael Graves, who's kind of a

big deal architect. Anyway, she had come back to visit Charlottesville and I found out there was an opening, I think it was literally the only job I applied for, and I didn't hear anything back and it was like a week after graduation so I moved everything from Charlottesville back to South Bend, Indiana and then they wanted me to come for an interview. I ended up getting that job and I worked at Michael Grave's office for three years. What was important about that is I realized I really didn't want to be an architect. I had thought that's what I'd end up doing. I thought because Virginia, at least at that point, didn't have a professional undergraduate program, I thought I would do an architectural history degree, which I loved, and then maybe apply to come back for graduate architecture school, whether there or somewhere else, to get a professional degree. Working for an architect, I realized that was not my path forward and I ended up applying to law school and going to law school instead. That was after working for three years.

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

I'm sure there's a ton of things that I probably just take for granted. College serves as a time to just figure things out for yourself. It's interesting that you ask that because the whole idea of the honor code is something that really appealed to me about Virginia. I was never really involved with honor, and I actually wonder what if I had gotten involved with that. The other thing I never really got involved with at Virginia that I always wanted to was the tour guides. I loved the history so much, it's like why didn't I do that? I have a daughter who graduated high school last year and her high school was just instituting an honor code when she was in ninth grade and she got really involved in that and led it her senior year. I don't know, I'm living vicariously through her, that meant a lot to me. I do think that's something that is not just on its face "lie, cheat or steal" but more generally has shaped me in how I approach things and see things in my

life and a professional capacity, not just in terms of what you do but in how you do it. It certainly comes up in being a parent and the kinds of things you're trying to instill in your kids. Clearly, not using the language exactly the same, but in having these values or rules or what's important. As silly as it sounds, and I even still have the quote framed on my desk "I have worn the honors of honors, I have graduated from Virginia" it's an alum from 1903.

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

That's a great question. Literally another alum helped me get my first job out of college. I've joined the Young Alumnae Council, it started when I was a young alum and I was a part of that and came back to Charlottesville for a bunch of those meetings. I just love having that connection and I think the alumnae association generally does a really good job of keeping people who want to feel connected. I don't feel like I've used resources otherwise and I don't know if that's because you know even though I graduated from the A-School, my career path ultimately took a different turn so there wasn't an obvious connection when I was in law school or when I was looking for work after law school or changing jobs later. But the alumnae association and the reunions, I haven't come back for every one, but for a few, and they've been really important. It's really been the friends that I've maintained since Virginia, more than like alumnae networking or anything. I feel like that could be something really different if it was a different time. Now that there are so many women alums, I would think now for people graduating, I don't know, I feel like it must be different now than it was before.

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

I mean if I had to try to answer, it's probably one that's not completely realized, like what that legacy is. I think that, I know that there were some women admitted to certain schools before they were really allowed to be in the college, you know to come as undergraduates. I feel like in some ways, Virginia has kind of held on to that to make it seem not as bad as it really is. Okay so here's an example, I've taken one trip that was related to UVA. The School of Architecture has a program in Italy that I didn't go on, I did the London study abroad instead of the Italy study abroad. Partly because I always wished I had gone to Italy I think and possibly just because it was possible, there was an anniversary trip in the fall of 2019 and this is partly a personal connection, but there was a professor in the school of architecture, Mario di Valmarana whose family like since the 1500s had owned and continues to own this villa designed by a famous Italian Renaissance architect, Andrea Palladio. It's a super cool thing and they were basically doing a weekend of anniversary celebrations, celebrating anniversaries of the A-School and the program, and anyway it was open and another UVA friend of mine and I decided we were going to go and I ended up being seated at the big dinner next to, just completely randomly, next to a woman who was the first woman to graduate from the then graduate program of architecture at Virginia. Coincidentally, we have the same last name and her first name is my middle name and it was just completely random. I just realized, as much as I had done women's studies and stuff, I really didn't know much about women's history and legacy at the school and women at Virginia. My big research project my fourth year was in women and the historic American building survey, so I was up in D.C. researching at the Library of Congress and doing all of this work, but I really don't know that much about women in architecture at Virginia for example. That's why when you ask about the legacy of women, I think it's kind of yet to be discovered in a way, like what was happening with students, like my example sitting next to Sue Nelson at that

dinner, but other examples as well, like that dean who I can't remember her name. I hope there can be some emphasis on that.

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

The first thing that came to mind was like go for it. I mean, being there, I think there's so many opportunities that you have by virtue of being at Virginia. There are so many things that you have. Also, not to worry about whether it works and who your advisor is and whether you can do it or not, just go for it. I know that's Nike or something, but I just think that's such an important thing. It's a little bit of a heartfelt thing too. So, my daughter turned down Virginia this year to go to a women's college and I was pretty torn about that. I'm excited that she is where she is, but I feel like that's the kind of thing I would tell her if she was at Virginia, you know just make the most of it. It's a school with so much to offer and that's what appealed to me, this sort of idea of this liberal arts school. This amazing place with people coming from all over with the history of a real sense of looking ahead. I've never thought twice about choosing Virginia and I also feel, especially having gone through the whole college application process as a parent now, I think where you end up you can be happy and you can make it work, it doesn't always have to be this one school or this one path. With so much that UVA offers, I think it's a great option and a great place where you can just go for it no matter what you want to do.

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

I think some of the reckoning that's going on is a really big difference and I'm really glad for that. I think there are parts of UVA's past, not just regarding admitting women, but regarding admitting other students based on race or ethnicity or skin color and you know the legacy with Jefferson is not all rosy. There was one semester I did this archeology class and we participated in a dig every week, every week we were up at Monticello and that was just the very beginning of what they were looking at. Well, this was a very different time, even though I think people were starting to reckon more with the history of enslaved Africans there and workers. Coming back, taking my kids back and even seeing Monticello now just feels different in a really good way, it feels less historic house museum and much more like it's trying to tell a story. I think that's at least partly the same thing on Grounds and at the university and I think that's a good thing.