

UVA, 2001, Michelle Perrin Steinberg

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SPEAKERS

Gabrielle Ringer, Michelle Perrin Steinberg

Gabrielle Ringer 00:00

So I'm going to start recording, if you could, could you tell us your name the year you graduated from UVA and your majors, please?

Michelle Perrin Steinberg 00:09

Sure. My name is Michelle Perrin Steinberg. And I graduated from UVA College of Arts and Sciences in 2001. And my major was government and foreign affairs with the concentration of us American government.

Gabrielle Ringer 00:23

Okay, cool. Can you tell me a few things about yourself, so like, your family, your job, like the things that bring you joy, whatever you want to say?

Michelle Perrin Steinberg 00:33

Sure. So I am a wife and a mother. Actually, this December will be my 10 year wedding anniversary. So I'm very excited about that. And I have one little boy, he is seven years old. And that's my family. I'm an only child. My father also went to UVA, graduated in 1975. And I'm biracial. So my dad is African American. So he was one of the few African Americans at the university during that time. So I'm a legacy student. And you know, I always wanted to go to UVA. What I do now is I am an attorney. I am a lead senior legal counsel at one of the largest global software companies in the world. And what I focus on is export controls and trade sanctions like international law. And I've been doing this since 2006. So a while here, but I really enjoy what I do. And you know, really happy to be here with you Gabrielle.

Gabrielle Ringer 01:40

Oh, thanks. So like, what's your UVA story? How did you decide to come to UVA?

Michelle Perrin Steinberg 01:47

Yep. So as I mentioned, my dad went to school here. So when I was growing up, I was an army brat, my father was in the military. So we moved around a lot, but we lived in in the Virginia, Maryland, DC area, most of my life. And you know, my dad was a proud wahoo. And I just, I mean, he didn't, he talked about his time at UVA. But there was no pressure for me to go to school here. Like, that's the great thing about my parents is that they let me decide, you know, where I wanted to go to school, my mom is from Vietnam. So she didn't go to college. But with my dad going to UVA, you know, I really just felt like an affinity to the school like, because my dad went here. And when I was looking at schools, we

were living in Alabama at the time when I was in high school. And so I applied out of state. And I applied early decision, and I got in, so it was the only school I applied to. And I was just, I just felt like I was supposed to go there. And then I came for one of the open houses in the spring. And it definitely like solidified, you know, my like, this is this is where I want to be. So I was very excited. And then when I came to UVA, you want me to go into that part about like what I did at UVA.

Gabrielle Ringer 03:07

Yeah, that's actually my next question.

Michelle Perrin Steinberg 03:08

So great. Yeah. So I started out, pre med, like I thought I wanted to be, you know, a doctor. And so I started taking all of these like biology and lab courses and like calculus, but I just didn't find joy in the coursework, like I wasn't that excited about it. I've never been, you know, a math person, but I thought I would like the science courses, but it just, it just didn't seem like it was the right thing for me anymore. And so I started taking other courses, I've just really like broadened, you know, the types of courses I was taking. And I ended up taking a lot of like political science courses, and also like legal courses like constitutional law and commercial law through the comm school. And I just really liked that and I was thinking, you know, maybe maybe I should go to law school. So I kind of switched things there. And during this time of trying to figure out you know, is law school for me, I decided to get involved in the university Judiciary Committee. So I started out I think, as an educator, and I did that for a few years. I think I was kind of like a different student in that I my first year at UVA, I applied to live in one of the residential colleges so I lived in Hereford and so I had like a different like first year experience because Hereford was still fairly new. But I really liked that, you know, it was like a community like it was, you know, to be like a residential college and everybody like are supposed to be together and have meals together. And there's a lot of international students which I also loved because being an army brat like I've lived, you know, all throughout the US and abroad and I love the idea of being with a lot of international students. So that was a really good experience. I lived in Hereford for I think two years. And then my last year and a half because I graduated a semester early. I lived in Brown College. So I did the whole residential college the whole time. And I really loved it. I studied abroad one summer and went to Italy. And that was a great experience. And so with that, you'll get had enough credits to graduate a semester early. And I knew I wanted to go to law school. So I wanted to help my parents out and save some some tuition money. But after university, like there was just so much to get involved in, it was almost like overwhelming, like all the opportunity. So I think I was just more on the, okay, let me just find a few things to do. Because otherwise, like, there would just be so much to do. So I like I said, like, I picked the university Judiciary Committee. And then I've just focused on, you know, my coursework and connections with people, I spent a lot of time with people, like just trying to build relationships, when I think back on like, how did I spend the time. And that's really what it is, like, I really tried to get to know the people that were in my classes. So I love that I invested in people, and I still do that now, like I'm such a people person.

Gabrielle Ringer 06:24

So did you feel like women were, like, encouraged or discouraged to join extracurriculars in general, or like, maybe some like particular extracurriculars?

Michelle Perrin Steinberg 06:34

You know, I didn't really, I don't think I felt that way. But I will say that I did notice that there was a lot of women doing volunteer work, like I was into volunteer work to, but like when it came to like Madison house volunteers, I mean, it just seemed to be like, okay, women did that, you know, or there was a lot of women, you know, at the Curry School of Education, or at the nursing school. So like any kind of programming or initiatives that they did, you know, it was like, very heavy on women, there probably was some kind of, you know, assumption that that's what women would do. And then in my major, you know, in government and foreign affairs, it was more so heavily weighted on men, like, I just feel like, you know, if there was any programming, you know, that was coming out of those departments. It was weighted more towards men showing up.

Gabrielle Ringer 07:33

Um, so What, did you have any sort of like experience with Greek life, either positive or negative? Or maybe not at all?

Michelle Perrin Steinberg 07:41

Yeah, I didn't really have any. My dad, when he was at UVA, he was in one of the black fraternities Kappa Alpha Psi, so he is a Kappa. And I know, he had a good experience. And it was just never something that I felt like I needed to do. Like, I didn't feel like strongly one way or the other. I know, when I was, you know, you know, my first second year, there were other friends of mine, who, you know, that's what they wanted to do. And I and I, under, you know, I was very closely there with their experiences and what they needed to do. And I think, maybe once or twice, I went with them to different parties and things that they were doing, so I was exposed to it. So I was exposed to it, but it wasn't something that I felt like I needed to do. And I still feel like that, like, I don't feel like I missed out on anything, you know, not doing that. But I understand, you know, it serves you know, it has its place for people and I know a lot of people, you know, found a lot of joy and satisfaction being part of it, but it just wasn't something that I felt like I needed to do.

Gabrielle Ringer 08:45

Okay, um, so what's your favorite UVA memory?

Michelle Perrin Steinberg 08:49

Okay, so I have two really good memories. One is you know that that very beginning when you're a first year and you're on the Lawn I think they call it convocation.

Gabrielle Ringer 08:59

Yeah.

Michelle Perrin Steinberg 09:00

And you come and you know, you're facing Milan, you're facing the Rotunda. And you sign the honor is it called the honor pledge or some scroll, you say your name. And I just thought that was like really like symbolic, you know, like, we're at this university where there is students self governance, you know, writing, you know, the honor code on everything, like tests and and, you know, exams and work that you're submitting. And there was just so much freedom and where you could complete the work and,

you know, professors trusted you and here, you know, you're starting college and you're saying that you're going to abide by this and you sign this, you know, scroll. So that was very memorable to me. It was at night and you know, the lawn looks so beautiful, and it was just so many things about that night, and then graduation like I graduated a semester early. So in December of 2000, like I was done with my coursework, but I wanted to walk the lawn so like in, you know, may 2001, like I came back to Charlottesville You know, I wanted to do that and have that, you know, I guess like, what is it called come full circle, right? And you're facing away from the Lawn. And you know, so that was just very like full circle experience like graduation. So I would say convocation and graduation.

Gabrielle Ringer 10:16

Okay, cool. Um, so what was the transformative moment for you at UVA?

Michelle Perrin Steinberg 10:23

So I think it was what I mentioned about being part of this student self governance, I didn't really know what it meant until I was actually a student, you know, like, I had heard about it from my dad. And, you know, I knew that's, you know, one of the things that UVA is known for the students self governance and you know, single sanction, if you know, you don't follow the honor code, and yeah, you hear about it, but then when you're a student, and you're, you're like living that every day. And like I said, about the, the Honor Code, having to write that out, I don't know, if you still, like, write it out that way. But like, I remember handwriting that out on work that I submitted, or typing it up and signing my name on work that I submitted. And it's just, you know, it's so meaningful, because it's so much trust, right? It's like, you're like building your character and who you are at this time, you know, in college, and it's like, you could do all these other things. But like, your honor, it's like you're saying you're not doing this, you know, and I've never been in a situation where it was like that before. So that was like, really eye opening for me.

Gabrielle Ringer 11:26

What was the most challenging thing about UVA?

Michelle Perrin Steinberg 11:30

I think it was that there was so many opportunities to just get involved in so many things, but it's almost look overwhelming for a young person, you know, like, I came to the University, and it's like, oh, my gosh, like, I remember the first week, like in the amphitheater, and there's like, all these student clubs and groups, and everybody, like was talking about what they were doing. And it's like, how, okay, like, I want to get involved, but there's just way too many things. Yeah. So it's just kind of sifting through? What is it that gonna like, how am I going to leave my mark here? There's so many ways to do that. Right? So I was just, like, overwhelmed with all the opportunity. And then when it came to coursework of so many courses, I mean, like, what, how do you decide, you know, so I think that was just a struggle, just figuring out like, narrowing down, like, what is it that I care about? Like, what do I want to focus on in these few years that I have here? And so, you know, I focused on government, I tried to go to that kind of programming, I tried to pick ok UJC, like, I want to go to law school, like, I want to, you know, focus on this group. But I just felt like, almost like FOMO, you know, fear of missing out on like, all this other stuff. So.

Gabrielle Ringer 12:48

And it's still that overwhelming. I remember when I was a first year and we went to, like, the resource fair. Like, it's like you, like just moved in, and it's like, the second or third day, and they say, and they just drop you off there. They say go.

Michelle Perrin Steinberg 13:05

Right, right.

Gabrielle Ringer 13:06

What do I do? Oh, my God. Yeah. Oh, wow. So tell me about like a woman or women at UVA who inspire you? Oh, so either it could be either now or during your time on Grounds.

Michelle Perrin Steinberg 13:23

Yeah. So, um, there was one professor that I have Professor Deborah McDowell. And she really inspired me because it was like, one of the few classes that I took that was taught by a woman. And it was an English literature course on African American writers. And, you know, I wasn't, I didn't, I don't think I took that many English courses. But I was looking for something different. I was looking for something that, you know, I really hadn't been that exposed to reading that much from African American female writers. And so I decided to take the class. And in that class, I just learned so much like, I felt like she like opened and expanded my mind. And she also helped me develop into a better writer, like, I thought I was a pretty good writer. But in that class, I mean, you know, she really challenged me and I had to really work and in that class, and I just remember also getting to know her during that time. And it was a small class, like it was, you know, like, less than 20 students, which was another thing because I, most of my courses, were, you know, we were in this massive auditorium. So it was a nice opportunity to be in a small group, and an intimate setting and so that that definitely stuck out to me and I appreciated her, you know, extra time with me to like just talking to me about, you know, what we were reading and my writing and how to even improve more and I think, you know, she really helped me

Gabrielle Ringer 14:53

what relationships Did you form with other women and did you find it easy to make those connections?

Michelle Perrin Steinberg 14:59

I definitely thought easy to make connections. I think it was just how I grew up being an army brat like always being the new kid moving around every couple of years, I've always had to make new friends very easily, right. So that that wasn't a problem for me to make friends. I was fortunate that what I was in high school, I like spent one year at a school in Arlington, Virginia. And so some of the people that I went to school there, were at UVA with me, and one in particular, her name is Anna Corolla, and it's like, she and I remained in touch. And so she, you know, we were in the same class. And so it was nice that she was there, because, you know, I always had like a friend, you know, there. And then, you know, I met other people along the way. And Deanne Overbeck was another good friend of mine. And we kind of had a similar background like her, her dad was in the Air Force. And, you know, my dad was in the army. And, you know, we were always moving around. So you know, gravitated towards people who have like, similar life experiences to me. So those few friends and then, like, I was very present,

but that's one thing I do remember is that when I was at UVA, I was very present. So like, the courses and the people that I was going through that stage with, I felt like we were like, very connected. So, you know, and those people, you know, like my roommates, too, like I had, you know, roommates when I was at Brown College. And, you know, we were very close. And yeah, I think you need, you know, you know, that sisterhood, that group of friends to kind of like, go through that stage with.

Gabrielle Ringer 16:38

Okay, so, um, what was the presence of like, women's groups or like movements on Grounds? Like, if there were any?

Michelle Perrin Steinberg 16:46

Yeah, like, I remember. I think it was called, like, Take Back the Night.

Gabrielle Ringer 16:53

Yeah

Michelle Perrin Steinberg 16:53

That's what it was called. I remember that being something that was like an annual event. And that, like, got a lot of like, momentum and traction, just remember there being a lot of flyers, a lot of word of mouth about it. And there was a lot of discussion and emails and in the Cavalier Daily News, news articles about, you know, sexual assaults, and, you know, safety and, you know, people talking about their stories, so I do remember that movement. I don't really remember any other movements. Okay. There probably were some, but there's so much there's so much on campus, and ground.

Gabrielle Ringer 17:34

Yeah,

Michelle Perrin Steinberg 17:34

you know,

Gabrielle Ringer 17:36

definitely overwhelming.

Michelle Perrin Steinberg 17:37

Yeah, that's what I remember though

Gabrielle Ringer 17:39

okay. Um, so how many courses Did you take at UVA that were taught by female professors? And if you could, can you talk a little bit about like, the courses that they taught and the kind of like diversity that the courses that they taught represented, as well as the professors themselves.

Michelle Perrin Steinberg 17:54

So that African American writers course taught by Deborah McDowell, and African American faculty member, that one stood out to me, honestly, like, I don't know, if I took any other courses that were

taught by women. I do remember in arty history course, I took where the section that the small group part of it that was taught by a female teaching assistant, but the main course I don't, I think that was taught by a male professor, but the smaller group was, I remember having a female teaching assistant, which I learned a lot in that class too, because I don't know, I guess I just thought like our history, like, it's, you know, it's more like a, for me at the time, I was like, Oh, it's a hobby, I'm just gonna learn about art. But then it was, you know, it's like, very detailed, like, you go into this and like, all the things you have to learn, and I remember that teaching assistant, like really opened my eyes to like, you know, this is, you know, serious like this is, you know, the art art is more than just looking at I mean, there's so many, like, so much history to it, you know. So I learned a lot in that class to try to think like, with other female professors that I have, I honestly don't think there were that many. I had a drama class that was taught by a female professor so the drama class, the art history class, the English class. And I think that's it. Yeah, I think that's it.

Gabrielle Ringer 19:21

So like, the politics department was pretty overwhelming, overwhelmingly male.

Michelle Perrin Steinberg 19:26

I don't think I had one. Government foreign affairs American history course that was taught by a woman. Hmm, I don't know. Has that changed? is there is there more female faculty in that department?

Gabrielle Ringer 19:39

There's a few but it's still pretty overwhelmingly male.

Michelle Perrin Steinberg 19:42

Yeah.

Gabrielle Ringer 19:43

I have a friend who's a foreign affairs major now and she she's a foreign affairs major and like, I think a double major maybe in like biology or something or bioethics. And she has, she has never had a female professor in any of her foreign affairs classes. Which is wild. Like, I would definitely say if you're like ever curious, go look at the website, because it's just like, like old white man after old, old white man. And then there's women in there. And you know, they, I think that maybe there's a few people of color maybe in the faculty now, but it's definitely not. It's still overwhelmingly old white men.

Michelle Perrin Steinberg 20:23

Yeah, so that's an area where they can improve and yeah definitely

Gabrielle Ringer 20:30

Okay, so for this next question, you can be as specific or nonspecific, as you want whatever you're comfortable with. But, um, what were your experiences with sexism or misogyny on grounds?

Michelle Perrin Steinberg 20:41

I was thinking about this, like, I don't, I can't recall an instance where where that was an issue, or I felt, you know, a certain way about that. I, I do recall, you know, at that time, there were a lot of different I guess there was a lot of talk about race at that time about students and race and also people in the LGBT community. Like, I remember when I was there, there was an incident on beta bridge, and it was involving a man and I think they had said that it was like a homophobic incident. So like, I remember that like, but as far as like sexism, like I don't, I don't recall any instances where that was, like affecting me. That's not to say that it didn't happen. I might have been just didn't think of it. You don't I mean, like I, because sometimes things happening, you don't really take it a certain way. Or you don't think that that's what it is. And I think when I was younger, maybe I didn't realize, you know, some of what was going on. So it didn't leave an impression on me. I'll put it that way.

Gabrielle Ringer 21:53

Gotcha. Okay. So did you feel like there was an open LGBTQ plus presence at UVA when you were there?

Michelle Perrin Steinberg 22:01

Yeah, I do felt feel like that. I mean, there were definitely like, student groups supporting LGBT too and that I do remember that, you know, when that incident happened on beta bridge, there was a lot of activism, you know, there was a lot of discussion about it. And so I think that those student groups were there. And just similar to you know, race relations to like, the Black Student Alliance, and, you know, the Asian American Student Alliance, and, you know, all of those groups were active at UVA when I was there. And, you know, there were issues going on. I mean, there were issues that the black bus stop, there were issues, you know, people on the corner, and there was just so many things that, you know, it really hasn't changed in a way because that's still going on. Now. It's just more heightened, and there's more focus on it now. But, I mean, all of those same things are happening when I was a student.

Gabrielle Ringer 22:56

Gotcha. Um, did you feel pressured to go into a certain major or like, avoid a certain major during your time in college?

Michelle Perrin Steinberg 23:05

Yeah, I never felt like pressure to go into any kind of major No, I, in fact, what I like felt like the opposite. Like, I was just trying to figure it out, you know, like, I went in thinking I was going to be pre med and that I was okay, well, that's not what I'm doing. And then I kind of thought, Okay, I will go to law school, and I didn't feel like, you know, there was any pressure of not doing that or doing it. Now, I didn't feel any of that.

Gabrielle Ringer 23:29

Okay. You talked a little bit about this earlier, but did you notice a disparity in the population of men and women in your major?

Michelle Perrin Steinberg 23:38

Yes, definitely. Um, I don't know if I thought of it so much at the time, but like, after leaving UVA, I thought more about that, and how, you know, most of the professors in my major were men. And, and

not only in my major, but other courses that I took most of them, you know, we're taught by men. And, you know, I hope that the university, you know, is trying to be a little bit more gender, like, balanced in that and so that, you know, students get a more balanced education. Yeah, but I don't Yeah, it was, it was definitely more men back then.

Gabrielle Ringer 24:17

In your classes as well, like,

Michelle Perrin Steinberg 24:19

Yeah, definitely. Yeah, my classes. So like, the government affairs courses that I took, most of the students in, there were men. I mean, there were women. Like, I didn't feel like I was sticking out being a female in the courses. Because I wasn't the only female. But there was definitely more men and then in terms of like, race, like, you know, there I probably wasn't the only like, person of color, but there weren't as many, you know, people of color in any of my courses. Gotcha. Okay.

Gabrielle Ringer 24:54

So, um, what was relationship or hookup culture like during your time at UVA and Did you feel like you'd be a lean towards maybe one or the other.

Michelle Perrin Steinberg 25:04

So I think it just depends on like, your circle of friends, like, I feel like that is very depend on that like, like, I felt like I wasn't part of any like Greek life or any like, larger group, right? Even like my work on the University Judiciary Committee, there are many, like, I went to the meetings and but I didn't really socialize with the people outside of that. So I wasn't part of any, like, bigger group. And, you know, the roommates that I had, were kind of like me, and that we were, I don't want to say that we were like, focused on other things, because, you know, we're all like, they're the same age discovering ourselves and everything like that, and the whole college experience, but I just, it just wasn't a focus on my friend group to be you know, pursuing, you know, these relationships or like hooking up with people, it just wasn't, but I'm not saying that that wasn't going on, you know, on Grounds. It's just wasn't something that was in my circle, right. But I just think it's interesting how it's different now, like, with nowadays, you know, with all of these social media and dating apps and things like that wasn't happening back then, like people barely had cell phones. So, you know, you kind of had to, like, go out of your way to like, meet people and go to these parties and go out, you know, and I just wasn't, I wasn't, I wasn't a night person either. So like, I didn't want to go out. I didn't go to parties and stuff like that. I just wasn't, I don't know, it's probably just a boring student.

Gabrielle Ringer 26:36

Okay, cool. Um, so Was there any talk about like, consent and respect on grounds? And if so, do you think it was like, thorough or helpful?

Michelle Perrin Steinberg 26:45

Yeah, that I do remember, like, what the Take Back the Night like when that was gearing up that time like that those couple months before and after, there was a lot of talk about that, like I do remember, you know, there's different opportunities to attend different speaking events where people would talk

about consent and talk about, you know, buddy system. And there would also be men talking about how they can look out for women and like walking people home and offering different service services. And I remember, there was a service, like, if you needed to have somebody drive you home, like there's different ways to contact people to do that. And there was safety, more safety, education about like, they're these phones, I think they call them like blue light phones or I don't know phones, that they'd be nice places. And like how to use the phones and where they are. And so remember that there was a lot of like, education opportunity to learn about that, during that Take Back the Night time.

Gabrielle Ringer 27:46

Did you have any sort of like, like dorm education? Did anyone come to your dorm to talk to you about consent?

Michelle Perrin Steinberg 27:55

I feel like that was probably an opportunity. Like, I feel like there was probably an opportunity to attend maybe from one of the Ra residential advisors that they were doing that and if you want to talk here about it, then come to this meeting. Yeah, I feel like that that probably was available.

Gabrielle Ringer 28:11

Okay. Um, so what was your journey after leaving UVA?

Michelle Perrin Steinberg 28:17

So I graduated a semester early. And I ended up working for a senator during that semester, I like worked for a senator on the hill, which was great because I was political science. And, you know, I knew I wanted to go to law school, but I wanted to take a year off. And then you know, I graduated and then I went to Italy, because I thought I was fit. I studied abroad in Italy. And I made a friend there. And I wanted to teach English, Italy before I went to law school. And so I went there to Italy. And that was when September 11 happened. And so then I stayed in Italy for maybe another month or two, but then decided that I would rather be home because my dad was actually stationed at the Pentagon during the September 11. So that was like a very scary time not knowing what was happening, but thank God, but he was safe. So I came back to the United States. And then I ended up working at different like nonprofits and different organizations in DC. And then I went to law school. And I went to law school at Syracuse, in upstate New York, and I was there for three years. And then I moved back to the DC area and started working in government commercial contracts, and then started working in international trade for defense contractors and so on and so forth. But I still stayed like very connected with the university. You know, I joined the UVA alumni club, like right after, you know, I graduated in attended when they're happy hours and especially because I was still in the DC area. Yeah. And even when I was in New York, I would come home, like for the summer, and I'd be in the DC area. And so there was just there was a lot of UVA alumni, right. So like I was part of the UVA alumni club. But then, when I was working, I ended up working at Booz Allen for a few years. And then I worked at FAIC for a few years. And that was all in Virginia. So there was just so many, like, everywhere you went, there was like UVA alumni, and it was almost like, you know, we have this shared experience. And you when you find out, somebody else went to UVA, it's like a shared experience. And you're like, Okay, you already have something in connection, you know, in common, and we have a connection with that person. So I feel like the, you know, the school name, especially in this DC area, I mean, it goes a long way. And,

and I still am, you know, very happy being part of the UVA community and I try to find ways to support students. One of the things I do is I'm a member of VAAN, the Virginia alumni admissions network. And so it helps bring, like first generation underrepresented minorities to the university. And they have a lot of different initiatives. And with this pandemic going on, last summer, we wrote postcards to first year, students first gen and students of color, just to like, as a motivating thing, like, Hey, you know, this is a weird time, but you're going to a great university, and, you know, to support them.

Gabrielle Ringer 31:28

Okay. So let me see, is there something you learned at UVA that you apply to your life now?

Michelle Perrin Steinberg 31:40

Yeah, I think it's what we talked about, about how, you know, there is so much opportunity, right, so like, you can't do everything. And something I learned early on at UVA is that you just have to pick what matters most. Find a few things, and make your mark that way. You know, it's like you. You want to find something that you're passionate about. So figure out what that is, and focus on that. So that I kind of take took that with me everywhere. Because the same things happened when I was in law school, like there are so many things you can do, like so many groups that are in need, and you know, volunteer here and there, and there's so much but if you remember, you know, what's important to you, you can like focus on those things. But also, like, the whole connection, that people is what matters, right? So like I, you know, still try to focus on forming those relationships with people. And I think it's even more important now, like with this pandemic, and finding ways to still have connection with people, and in this whole, you know, social media, like, era of like being on devices and stuff like that, like you're kind of missing life. So I think it's very important to remember people and remember those human interactions.

Gabrielle Ringer 33:01

So what does the UVA alumni community mean to you? And how has your fellow alumni affected your life, your life, your career, your general journey?

Michelle Perrin Steinberg 33:11

Yeah. So the via community, I mean, it's just an awesome community. You know, like I mentioned, the brand, the name of the school, it goes a long way, it's very well respected. When I meet other alumni, just wherever, you know, if I'm wearing like a UVA like shirt or something I, you know, when I was traveling a lot for when I was at Deloitte, I would travel all the time, and I remember like, being at an airport in Bangkok, and like, you know, there, you know, somebody like, you know, it's like it, it's fun, because it's like, you have that shared connection, right. So that's really fun seeing that. And, you know, I feel like as alumni, you know, we should be giving back to the next generation finding some initiative to support like, there's so much going on with the Alumni Association and different groups that you can find a way to support students. And so like I mentioned, I found that through, you know, the Virginia alumni admissions network and supporting first gen and students of color, that's what I care about. So I want to make sure that you know that there is opportunity there for that population. But there's so many ways to just give back. And then for me personally, like when I was a student, I remember wanting to do like, externships and internships. And I remember working with Career Services, and the alumni were so generous with their time, like I when I was thinking, you know, going to law school and becoming a lawyer. I remember when I was at UVA, like, there were those times

where, you know, there were alumni at law firms who like took me in and like I, you know, I did a couple different externships with like, Latham & Watkins. And that was all because of alumni wanting to support so, you know, I benefited from, you know, a UVA alumni supporting me early on when I was trying to figure out what I wanted to do, and I try to do the same thing you know, with With van, if the school tells me that, you know, they're, you know, students that they want me to talk to you, like, I'm happy to do that, you know, happy to talk to any student, if they're interested in something that I've done, or, you know, however I can, you know, help students.

Gabrielle Ringer 35:18

So, in your opinion, what is the legacy of women at UVA?

Michelle Perrin Steinberg 35:22

So I think it's pretty complicated because that, you know, the history of being excluded. Right, and I feel like whatever there is exclusion, because of, you know, your gender, or race, or other reason, I mean, it's just complicated, right? I mean, there are struggle there. And there were mistakes that were made. And, you know, the University trying to right those mistakes. And I think women too, like not giving up and like being very strong and resilient, and finding a way, you know, not not, you know, giving up on their dreams and finding a way to make it happen. So I think, you know, women are very strong and doing that, but it's just like a complicated sort of history of like, what has happened. But I also think that now with everything that's been happening, you know, over the past year, you know, here in this country, I mean, the university is really putting things in place to, to make sure that everybody feels that they belong at the university that they can connect with the university and that they have the same opportunity to grow. And so I'll mentioned that yesterday, was the kickoff of Black Alumni Connect, because there's Black Alumni Weekend, but it wasn't happening this year, because of the pandemic. So there's a way that they wanted to still do something. So it's a virtual Connect, and so started yesterday, and it was good to hear from President Ryan and like all the different initiatives that are being made at the university to support inclusion.

Gabrielle Ringer 37:00

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

Michelle Perrin Steinberg 37:09

Oh, man, this is tough. Um, there's so much to say, right? I mean, I would say, you know, this is the time like college is a time to figure things out, to learn about yourself, right? To figure out who you are, what you stand for, like what you want your future to be. I mean, this is the time to figure that out. And I think, like I said, there's so much opportunity to so many courses to hit like so many people to learn from, I mean, open yourself up, like, have all of those experiences, even if you know what you want to do, I think it's so important to like, take other courses and like, talk to people, you know, and I think talking to people is really what is important to like hearing other people's perspective, even if you you have a point of view on something, I just remember conversations when I was in college, you know, like, I was very, you know, thinking one way about something, and then somebody else is like sharing their point of view. And you're like, Okay, I can see that point of view, you know, it's really like opening up your mind and listening to what other people have to say. And so it's that exposure, I would say,

expose yourself to all of these opportunities, and focus on those connections. I mean, you're building your network. And you might not realize it, but these are people that you're going to be in contact with for the rest of your life, if you want it to be, you know, try to find those people who you can go through life with. I mean, I that's what I would try to do. And you know, remember why you're there, obviously, to get an education. But have fun, too. I mean, you know, it's your time to, you know, have fun and not have to be weighed down by like, adult life. Yeah. So that's what I say.

Gabrielle Ringer 38:50

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

Michelle Perrin Steinberg 38:56

Yeah, I would love to learn more about like, women of color at the university, like what happened to you know, like, like, all about, you know, Black women like Asian women, Hispanic women, like, what is their journey? You know, like, what was their journey? Like, I would love to hear from women of color and their experiences at the university.

Gabrielle Ringer 39:14

Okay. Um, and what do you think is the biggest difference that in terms of your experience at UVA, and what's going on now in 2021?

Michelle Perrin Steinberg 39:24

Yeah, I just think back then it's almost like old times like 2001. It would have been like, my 20 year this year, right. And it just seems like I went to school in the olden days. Now, I mean, you guys have so much to worry about, like with the like I said, with the social media, the social media, and like all of that everything is just there like we'd like we'd like I said, we barely had cell phones, like when I was, you know, going through college, so it was just you didn't have to worry about a lot of different things. But also this pandemic, like I don't even know what it's like should be at a university during a pandemic, you know, on zoom classes and so isolated, but you're supposed to be in this environment where you're supposed to build relationships with people on it's just, that must be very challenging. Like we didn't have a pandemic going on. So, you know, like, I just, you know, really feel for students, especially like young students. I mean, you know, first year is not really having bad experience, Second year, you know, you probably have like, one semester before everything went on lockdown last year. So it's the anxiety too like, just anxiety about being away. And then anxiety about the pandemic. I mean, these are just things that, you know, I didn't worry about when I was a student.

Gabrielle Ringer 40:41

Okay, so that was actually my last question, but I wanted to see if you had anything else you wanted to add, before I stopped recording.

Michelle Perrin Steinberg 40:50

No, I'm just really happy to be part of this, you know, this whole, like, Retold Project and part of your project for school. And it's really interesting to me because it made me think about, you know, some of the questions you asked that I didn't really like, think about that, you know, and it's nice to reflect on

like, what, you know, like my experiences and remember, you know, these good times that I had and and kind of also see like, where the university is going now.

Gabrielle Ringer 41:19

Okay

Michelle Perrin Steinberg 41:20

Thank you.

Gabrielle Ringer 41:21

So you're, you're cool if I stop recording then?

Michelle Perrin Steinberg 41:23

Yes.

Gabrielle Ringer 41:24

Okay.

Michelle Perrin Steinberg 41:26

Okay.