

#15 INTERVIEW OF BLACK STUDENTS ENROLLED AT WASHINGTON AND LEE

1. *Have you decided upon a college major?*

If yes, what?

Yes. English and religion.

2. *(If the answer to question 1 is no, skip #7.) What is your grade point average (GPA) in your major field?*

No, I can guess. I guess religion would be about a B or a B+. No probably like a B. And English probably a B also.

3. *What type of degree are you working toward at Washington and Lee?*

BA

4. *What is the occupation or profession you want to enter upon finishing your education?*

I have no idea.

5. *Do you plan on working toward an advanced degree at some time after finishing your undergraduate program?*

yes

Do you have any idea about what you'd like to do?

Right now I'm thinking about law school.

6. *While growing up, did you attend or were you personally active in church? Yes / No*

If yes, please give the denomination, and the type of church activities in which you participated.

Yes. I'm Baptist. I'm from a Southern city, so, it's not really southern Baptist, but it's kind of is. I sang in the choir, I did mission trips, just was in the youth group, stuff like that. I worked at my church for two summers at the child development center.

How would you characterize your church involvement in Lexington?

Very minimal, unfortunately.

7. *How would you compare your level of participation in extra-curricular activities in high school and at Washington and Lee?*

They're about the same.

What sort of things?

Well, in high school I took ballet and I did church activities, like I said. And now I'm a girl scout troop leader, member of student development committee, I do things with other minority students, like recruiting and calling and hosting.

8. *How did you learn about Washington and Lee University?*

My parents.

9. *To what extent were you assisted during the admissions process by an alumnus of Washington and Lee?*

A lot.

10. *Did you visit the campus before you matriculated as a student?*

If yes, under what circumstances?

Yes. I visited with my dad when he would come to give speeches or things like that, and also I visited

here, Mary Baldwin, and Hollins just on a kind of tour with my parents.

Please describe your reactions to this campus visit.

I liked it. I didn't take into account like the social scene very much. I think I was just more looking at the academics. That part I liked a lot.

When you came were you able to visit classes?

I was able to visit classes. I came and I stayed once with a friend of my dad's daughter. And it was maybe a homecoming weekend. And then I came again and I stayed for accepted students weekend, so I was able to go to classes.

And were there meetings and things on that accepted students weekend?

Um hum. We had lunches and meetings.

Were there minority student meetings or was this just a general accepted students weekend?

I think it was minority students accepted weekend. Actually no, it wasn't. It was the general, but the minority students did have interviews with Angela Allen, who was the minority recruiter at the time.

Did you meet other minority students that weekend?

Yes.

What kind of feedback did you get from them?

They basically told me that, you know, it was pretty fun. I think their freshman year was a lot different than mine, because there were more minority students. They just were able to do more things.

What graduating year were they when you visited?

They were graduating in 95.

10a. Was W&L your...

Kind of a tie between here and Hollins. So, tie for first.

10b. About how many other colleges did you apply to?...

Three others.

10c. How many other colleges accepted you?

All.

11. What made you decide to attend Washington and Lee?

I liked the area. Like I said I liked the academics a lot.

Were there other factors you considered in making the decision?

My high school guidance counselor said it was a pretty good school. that graduates go to top graduate schools. and get good jobs was really important too. The size was important. I wanted a small school.

Did the alumni connection make a difference to you?

Yeah. Everyone was telling me how great it was, so..

Did you know more than one alumnus?

Um hum. I had a lot of alumni actually live in the neighborhood too.

12. Once you decided to enroll at W&L, what was the reaction of friends and relatives?

They were excited.

Were there negative images about W&L that made you think seriously about not coming?

No, I didn't have any negative images until like after I was here.

13. Once you were enrolled, did you find the University to be as you had expected?

Not really. Well, I guess I didn't really know what to expect, but it was a little bit less in some areas than what I had expected.

Less..in what way?

Like social activities for minority students and the attitude of a lot of students in general on campus.

Could you describe that more?

Well there's not a lot for minority students to do. I guess the Greek system is like the prevalent social thing here, and if you don't want to do that, there's not a lot else for you to do, and it's been my experience that just a lot of students are closed minded about certain things. Not just minority issues, but issues of like homosexuality and stuff like that. It's not a very liberal campus for a liberal arts school.

So are you saying social life and sort of like general attitude being so conservative?

Right.

Any other ways that the school was different from the way you expected?

I guess it's a lot harder that I thought it was going to be. Like academically.

If the school differed from the way it seemed when you first heard about it or visited the campus, please describe how it differed.

14. *Please describe what you consider to be your greatest challenge at Washington and Lee.*

How have you dealt with it?

I guess my greatest challenge just on the personal level, is to get other people to understand how it feels to be a minority student here, and the only ways that I can deal with it are through classes, and so currently I'm taking a black politics class, called Black Institutions. We have big discussions all the time.

What's the proportion of black and white students in the class?

Well, there are 8 people in the class and only two are black.

Are you saying that it's a chance for you to represent the minority student...

No, I don't think that I can represent all minority students, but just represent myself with my own opinions and experiences.

So, could you run by that again, what you consider your greatest challenge is, that, and how you're dealing with it..

Just to let other students know how it feels to be a minority student on campus.

And the biggest avenue that you've found is..

Through class.

15. *How has your academic performance at Washington and Lee compared with your performance in high school?*

Not as good as it was in high school, but it's steadily getting better. I think I just had to take time to adjust to a lot of things.

16. *What academic resources have you used at Washington and Lee?*

- x Undergraduate library
- Science library
- x Computer facilities.
- Writing Center.
- Tutors in the disciplines.
- x Study groups.
- x Public lectures on academic subjects.
- x Language lab.
- x Visiting professors in their offices.
- Study skills courses

That's about it.

Do you have suggestions for the development of these or other facilities?

Computer facilities, it's just - it always seems that the printers are broken. I guess new printers would be a great thing.

Any particular lab that that's a problem in?

All of them, well, maybe just for the Mac computers, I like macs better, but the Mac printers never seem to be working in any of the labs, so.. But everything else is pretty good.

17. *What factors contribute or contributed to your selection of a major course of study?*

I guess first of all, doing something that I enjoy doing. And, a good salary after graduation. So choosing English and religion, made you think about earning a good salary.

that's a very unusual..

Well, I'm doing it mostly because I like it, but English because a lot of people are like, well you can go to law school, plus I've had a couple of religion professors tell me that most religion majors become lawyers.

18. *Have you changed majors since you have been enrolled at Washington and Lee?*

No.

If yes, please describe that change.

19. *If you saw a person or group of persons lying, stealing or cheating would you report it as an honor violation? Please elaborate.*

Yes, I would. Well, I guess given all the speeches we've been given on the honor code, and everything, that'd be the right thing to do, plus I mean I feel like, if you go to school here, then it seems that everyone works really hard for the grades they get, and I don't think it would be fair for someone else to get a grade, like an easy grade, when I know that I've studied all night, and probably everyone else has too.

So it sounds like you feel good about the honor's system..

Um hum.

20. *Do you find Washington and Lee professors easy or difficult to approach?*

Please describe in what way they are easy or difficult.

It depends. Some of them are very easy and friendly and approachable, while others aren't. I think it just depends on the professor. I think they're difficult when they don't try to be flexible and realize that you have other classes besides theirs and you have other schedules to keep. When they won't talk to you on the phone, or do stuff like that. But they're pretty easy - I think a lot of them for the most part will talk to you whenever you need their help or anything.

So, when they're not taking into account that you have other things in your schedule, what form does that take?

Well, just recently, I had three things for three different classes on one night, all at the same time, and I don't like to make excuses to professors, but it's like kind of hard to tell them I have three different things to do and I had to pick one, because then it makes it seem like theirs wasn't as important and then they just don't seem to understand. And that's really hard. I mean, you can't help that. They all schedule something at the same time on the same night.

Do they tell you just shortly before it was due so that you couldn't plan ahead..

Well, I think they told us like a week ahead, but ..

Did you try to approach them about it, or did you feel that you couldn't..

I did, and the professor was like, well do it when you can, but didn't seem very pleased about it, or understanding.

And the ones that are easy to approach, in what way is that?

It's easy to have a conversation with them, or just talk to them about stuff that's been going on in class that you don't understand. They're very helpful.

Have you been able to establish close working relationships with a member or with members of the W&L faculty?

No, not really. I guess that's more just on my part. I don't know.

21. *What has been your experience at W&L with regard to social life?*

There's not much for me to do. I don't really like going to fraternity parties. I mean, I do it every now and then, but it's not like an every weekend thing. Usually I end up watching movies on the weekend or something, because I don't have a car, so I can't go to other schools. So it's kind of non-existent.

Could you describe what it is that you don't like about fraternity parties?

Drinking and smoking. People falling over you. Like very drunk people. I've seen people get sick because they're so drunk. I don't really like that.

So you don't smoke cigarettes?

No.

How important to you is alcohol at a social event or social engagement?

Not important at all.

How important to you are drugs at a social event?

Not important.

Are they visible to you?

No. But I do see people drinking a lot.

22. *What experiences, if any, have you had with Greek organizations on campus?*

Just going to the fraternity parties.

How would you evaluate or describe any experiences you may have had?

They weren't exactly the most fun thing I've ever done. That's why I don't do it very often.

Anything in particular that relates to you as a minority person?

Well just some things that people have told me that happened. I haven't experienced them directly but even just hearing it makes me not want to go.

Is it about specific fraternities or fraternities in general?

Well it was about a specific fraternity. I guess it happened a few weeks ago where we had some friends come over from another school and they went to a fraternity party and fraternity members were asking them to leave because they weren't W&L students, but they were W&L students with guests. That wasn't the basis [of my not liking them], but that just kind of added to it.

Is that the only thing that you've heard from friends that influenced your feelings about fraternity parties?

No, I guess it's just the general feeling sometimes that you're not really wanted there. You're kind of ignored. It's not really a comfortable situation for me.

23. *Evaluate your experiences with regards to athletic teams/athletic facilities/and physical education classes.*

Well, I'm not on a team and I guess the facility is nice, the gym is nice. And PE, we have to take a lot of 'em, a lot. I guess it's good. I'll be finished with PE this term. That'll be really good. But, a lot of them will be fun. Unfortunately, some are kind of expensive.

24. *How would you characterize your opportunities for "dating" while enrolled at Washington and Lee?*

Very slim. Because there are usually more black women than men. And most of the time, the men have long-distance relationships.

25. *Have you ever considered transferring from Washington and Lee to another college/ university?*

Yes.

Why/why not?

I was really frustrated freshman year, just with the way my grades were going and the way things were going socially. I just thought that a change in schools would be much better, going to a school where I knew a lot of people already might help me out a lot. But I decided that probably would hurt more than help.

In what way?

Because I probably would just get too comfortable and not do work or party more than I should.

If yes, what factor(s) influenced you to stay?
Academics.

26. *Have you had a paid job on campus (including work-study)?*
Yes.

If so, has this influenced your level of satisfaction at W&L?
Like in what way?

Do you think you feel more comfortable or more satisfied with your life here because you work on campus, or less because you work on campus?

Probably less, and that would be because of the way people have treated me while I was working. I work in catering and we did a lot of alumni functions, and the alumni weren't very polite. Yes, and I have offered to do student development calling, when we ask if they would like to donate to our annual fund, and that's when they are at their rudest. It's really bad. It's not a fun job at all.

And that would have nothing to do with you as a minority student, would it?

No. Well, the catering maybe, because they actually do see us then. But in the calling, no. I think they just get irritated because we call.

27. *Would you be willing to recruit other students for Washington and Lee either as a student yourself or as part of an alumni program? Please elaborate.*

Yes and No. I would be willing to do it as long as I could just tell them about academics. Like how much they would learn and if they really like to learn, how much they'd enjoy it. However, I would have to be honest about the social life and tell them there is absolutely nothing for you to do, unless you have a car and you don't mind driving like an hour or an hour and a half to get somewhere.

Where would you go if you could drive?

UVa or JMU.

When you think in terms that there is nothing for you to do, are you thinking in terms of for minority students to do together, or are you thinking in terms of people who aren't in the Greek system?

I am thinking more for minority students, because I guess there are so few of us. If we wanted to have a party, like just the minority students on Washington and Lee's campus, it wouldn't be enough really. We do have parties with VMI, but you have to go through so much so that they can get permission to leave campus in the first place.

Now we ask some background information:

28. *In what geographical location did you grow up:*

Country:

State: Georgia

*In what type of **area or community** did you spend most of your growing up years?*

Urban X

Suburban

Rural

29. *Describe the type of **high school** you attended.*

Urban X

Suburban

Rural

Predominantly

Black

White

Mixed X

What was the percentage?

I'm not sure, it was more black than white, but we were in a predominantly white neighborhood.

30 *Please give the kin relationship(s) between you and family members in your home when you were growing up.*

Just my mother and my father and my sister — little sister.

31. *What was the highest level of education achieved by your parents, guardians, or others with whom you lived when you were growing up?*

My dad has a law degree and my mom has an undergraduate degree.

What are the occupations or professions of your parents or guardians?

My dad is a partner in a private law firm and my mom is a manager of retirement department.

32. *As compared to other W&L students, how would you characterize your overall social class position (based on parents' education and family income)?*

I guess it's pretty average with everyone else.

How do you think this has affected your experience?

I don't think it's had much effect. I don't think that people really take the time, in my case, to find out any of that. I think that a lot of times they just figure — well, when I was a freshman I noticed a lot of times like, upperclassmen girls would talk to the freshman girls and encourage them to rush and everything. But no one ever talked to me, I'm sure no one talked to a lot of white students too, but it just seemed like you are just kind of overlooked in a lot of ways.

33. *In general how do you think about yourself first at Washington and Lee -- as a member of a particular racial/ethnic/national/gender group, or as a student?*

As a student first.

Please explain.

Well, I am here most for academic reasons, not for anything else. That's the most important thing.

34. *How homogeneous do you believe black students are on this campus? In answering please consider racial identification, political perspective, and/or social class position.*

I don't think they are homogeneous at all. A lot of the international students who are black, who are from like Trinidad and other countries, definitely identify with that first before they identify with being black. A lot of black students won't admit that they are black because they don't really look black. A lot of black students would rather just assimilate and forget that they're black. On the political perspective, I think that we're a very mixed bunch. I think a lot of people have a lot of different ideas, especially on class position, I think that's a mixed thing.

35. *How similar or different do you believe blacks and whites are on this campus? Consider the same categories that are mentioned in number 34 above and add any other factors that you deem important.*

I think that blacks and whites on this campus are very different. I think racial identification is a big thing. It can't be overlooked. I think that even in instances where a black person might be a member of a fraternity or sorority, there's always that time where, you know, their different race causes a slight tension or problems. It's not something that can be completely overlooked, and I am sure that other people can't help but notice it. Political perspective, I think is very different. I think a lot of the white students on campus tend to be very, very conservative. Or even if they probably aren't sure of themselves. I think a lot of black students are conservative, but in a different way. I think a lot of black students are conservative in, like, family values, things like that whereas a lot of white students are more conservative with, like, economic issues or something like that. I think that's the main difference. Social class position, I guess for the most part the black students here are on financial aid, but so are a lot of other students. So I guess that isn't a real big difference.

36. *Do you believe the size of the black student enrollment at Washington and Lee is adequate or inadequate?*

I think it is very inadequate. You had only 4 African-Americans in the freshman class, and I think that's really sad considering this school is so close to heavily black populated areas in the country. We are really close to D.C. and Temple Hills, which is an area in D.C., has the highest number of blacks who graduate from high school and go on to college. And since we are so close to there, I don't understand why we couldn't do something to recruit and get more black students.

Can you describe why you'd like to see that happen?

I think it would add a lot more diversity to campus. People would have to be open-minded because there would be more black people here. It wouldn't be just a topic that you talk about in class with no black people in class. There would be black people in your classroom talking about it with you. You could get more of a real perspective on things.

Do you believe the number of black professors is adequate or inadequate?

I think it's inadequate and also I think that the black professors we have are just kind of like, symbolic. Because I think that they want black students to assimilate into the mainstream, just kind of forget that you're black. The black professors here just make me upset a lot of times because they just — they don't seem to want to stand up, when they know something isn't going right or when they know that there is a problem, they haven't tried to fix it.

What gives you that impression?

Being in class, having conversations, like outside class conversations with them. Just hearing their viewpoints on certain things.

So it sounds as though you are saying that your experience with them is that they are conciliatory.
Right.

Do you believe the number of black administrators is adequate or inadequate? Explain.

It's very inadequate. I think there is only one. And we don't get along very well at all.

You personally?

Yes.

Why is that?

Well, she made a comment earlier this year, when we were trying to decide on a name for minority students association. A lot of people wanted to change the name, maybe to Black Student Union, or to something on the other extreme like Universal Students Association. I was against Universal Students Association, because it sounded more like International House, which was right next door. So if you wanted that, you could go next door. We weren't trying to exclude anyone, but this is an organization primarily for black students. However, this administrator told us that Minority was such a passé word, but what does she consider that on campus we are — a minority on campus. And that, and a few other comments she made, really upset me.

I wonder what she meant?

Well, she was all for the Universal Student Association. She said that by using Minority or Black, we were leaving other students out, which was not the case, because we do have students of other races who are members of Minority Students Association. I think she was pushing more for the assimilation of the whole group, which is not what we wanted at all.

So the other students of other races are also from minority races?

One or two are, but we also have two or three white students who are members also. I mean, we are not telling people that they can't join. Anyone can join. But it is primarily for black students.

37. *Should the university offer activities designed to bring new black students together?*

I think so.

If not, why not?

If yes...do you have suggestions?...

A black fraternity or sorority would be great. I recently talked to Dean Manning about this with some other students. We feel that with new housing rules, you know, it's very hard for us because, like I said, a lot of black students are on financial aid, so they cannot afford to live off campus, and obviously they

cannot afford to have a car. Whereas many other students here can. We don't have any other place to live, like fraternity or sorority homes, because we don't feel comfortable in that situation. So we shouldn't be forced to have to join just to have somewhere to live. So if we had a black fraternity or sorority, and a house to go with it, that would be great. I think it would bring black students together a lot. I don't see a lot of other black students on, like, day to day, going to class and everything. I see the ones I live with, but that's about it. Like, I haven't had much interaction with the freshmen.

Why is that, do you think?

Just the way classes are set up. Because there is nothing really for us to do socially. There is a reason for us to come together, but there isn't. There is nothing for us to do. You can only sit around and talk just so much. Having a black fraternity or sorority would create more things to do in the sense that fraternities and sororities have their own social functions, their own formals. I think that would be great.

Is there a black student population large enough to ...?

Well, we were talking about that also, and I think, to speak for the women, it is. For the men, it's not really, because some of the black men are in fraternities already.

And given the diversity that you reported among the black student population, do you think that would still work?

I'm not sure about the men, but I do know that the women would like to have a sorority.

Has the Chavis House played a role in your life at W&L? Please describe.

Yeah, kinda. That's where we have our Minority Students Association meetings. We've had, I guess, a couple of parties there. But I don't go there other than that. The house is pretty much falling apart, and is pretty sad to look at. I'd really rather not be there.

Would it be a place that you could have more parties if you chose to?

Oh, yes. But, there's carpet on the floor, so if you want to have a party and there's carpet on the floor — it's small. There's not really a party room. You have a party in the living room and the kitchen. Like on the whole first floor of the house, and people do live upstairs. So there's no basement, like soundproof basement to have a party in.

Has the Minority Student Association played a role in your life at W&L? Please describe.

Yes. I am a member and we've had speakers come, who I disliked. We've tried to have a few little functions. They are really aren't enough students — parties, get-togethers. When we have prospective who are black, we bring them there and watch movies. We have open forum, where we ask questions and stuff. Stuff like that, you know.

38. *Do you believe that it is important that courses in the humanities/social sciences include recognition or study of works by persons of color?*

Yes, especially here because I think that a lot of people don't realize a lot of the contributions in literature and social sciences that black people or people of color have made. I think a lot of times they are surprised.

If you think works by persons of color should be included do you think the recognition was adequate, inadequate, or excessive? Please explain.

I think it is inadequate. It seems that every three years maybe there are a couple of courses offered about minority groups, or I'm going to say "black." That's what I've noticed. And sometimes that course or list of courses will say that it's offered but then it's not. It's canceled. That's happened to me. I wanted to take an English class that was about African-American authors, and it was just canceled. It was for a winter term. I think that every three years is not adequate at all.

Were you also thinking, in terms of this question, that it was important that recognition be worked into normal classes as well?

Yeah, I think it should be. I don't think it's worked in to many classes at all. I don't know exactly how you could work it in. I'm sure that there's a way, but I don't see it happening.

39. *How would you characterize the climate in the classroom for you [as a black student]?*

Sometimes it is very uncomfortable because you're the only one. It's uncomfortable because, I guess, you don't know how other students will react to you, if you ask them for help, or something. You don't really know how to react to the professor if you've never had him before, or her.

You mean that as a black student you don't know how to react because you don't know how they will react to you?

Right. I think that sometimes you are just worried a lot and you shouldn't be, but you have to be, because that's based on your experience throughout life. I think sometimes you feel a lot of pressure to say something witty or smart, just so people will know you do deserve to be in that class, you aren't just put there to fill a quota, or something. A lot of times students don't talk to you unless they have to. Like they have to be in a study group and the professor says you have to be in that study group, then all of a sudden they talk to you and they know your name, whereas before they never spoke to you. That can be really frustrating.

Do you think that's an experience that happens mostly to black students?

I think so.

If you have encountered 'problems in the classroom, how have you dealt with those difficulties?

A couple of times I have talked to people outside of class who I thought there was a problem with, or I'll talk to the professor.

How do you approach it when you do that?

Well, I've had a couple of classes where we discussed topics like welfare and stuff like that, and that can lead to very heated debates, and so, just after class I'll say, "Can we talk about this?"

What kind of response do you get?

Sometimes it's been good, sometimes it hasn't been, but worth trying.

Is that some of what you meant when you said that you want to let people know what your experience has been?

Yes.

But you also said, I think, you wanted to let folks know what it was like to be a black student here, so what do you mean and how do you do that?

Again through discussion. A lot of times I have found it's the case that if you say that "well, I feel it's like this," then some students are really surprised, like "I never knew you felt like that, I guess I'd never thought about it that way." Like describing my life here, they'll say, "Well, I never thought about it that way." But then when you take the time to explain, they'll say, "Well, I guess that probably is true."

And you said earlier that you do that mostly through class, in class time?

In class time if the time or setting permits. Out of class if the situation arises. For instance, we were having an interview with a prospective religion major, and so, we could ask her questions and she could ask us questions, and I asked her what should thought about the lack of diversity on campus. That was a way to present this situation and started the talk with some people. This was with a prospective professor and some other students from that major. We were all having lunch with her and talking.

40. *What is the role of the Office of Minority Student Affairs?*

Basically to recruit minority students and to find out what's going on with them while they are here. But I think that's pretty — since Angela Hower [?] left I think it's not very representative. It would be really nice if we could have a minority recruiter for minority students. Currently we don't.

I didn't realized that she was connected with the Office of Minority Student Affairs.

I think she was connected more with the Admissions, but Minority Student Affairs, I don't think that they have done very much since I've been here.

What do you see that they do do?

They do get tutors for some minority students who need them. Things like that. That's about it.

How can the role of this Office be improved?

I think just with a new person to head it.

What would it take, if you were in charge of choosing another person or recommending the person that's here evolve in some way, what would your desires be?

To reconcile more of the problems of minority students on campus currently. Not what they have been or might be, but what they are right now. By talking more with minority students. I don't think that happens very much, or enough.

41. *From whom do you receive the greatest emotional support on campus? Do not use name(s), but please describe the person(s) in terms of race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, and position (i.e. fellow student, faculty member, administrator, staff member). If appropriate, include more than one individual and describe the type of situations in which the person provides emotional support (i.e. personal, family, religious, etc.)*

That would probably be all of my roommates. Three of them are black and one is white. They are all American, all female, all fellow students. I guess that when I am having a hard time with class or socially, I always have someone to talk to, even with family problems, there is always someone to talk to who listens.

What percentage of your friends are black, what white, and what international?

Probably half are black, and half are white, and not very many are international. There aren't very many international students here.

42. *Have you experienced any discriminatory behavior on campus directed against yourself? What form did that behavior take (written remarks including graffiti, spoken remarks, physical assault, discriminatory treatment). Who was responsible for that behavior?*

Individual students	X
Student groups	
Greek	X
Non Greek	
Faculty	
Staff	
Security	

I have experienced it. It was mostly fellow students who were responsible for it. I would say a lot of them are in the Greek system. Just kind of being ignored when you are speaking to someone, not being invited to certain things when everyone else has been invited, not being asked to join in on certain things, or being told, "Well, we thought you were invited" or "You wouldn't enjoy it." Having generalizations about my race made in speech to me. Like, "All black people are loud," and stuff like that.

So it included remarks and exclusive behavior, leaving you out?

Yes, but mostly remarks. A lot of times I don't think the remarks weren't even meant to be rude, but they were. I think a lot of people just don't — I think a lot of students here have never gone to school with or been around black people, so a lot of times they just don't know what to say or they say the wrong thing. But I think a lot of times, too, they do know what they are saying and they do mean to say hurtful things.

How do you handle that?

Well, a lot of times I just ask, "Well, what do you mean?" I don't think it helps the situation to ignore it or just pretend that you didn't hear it.

Leaving aside behavior, do you sense racial tensions on campus beyond what exists in the larger society? If so, how do you think such tensions could be eased within W&L?

Yes, because there are so few black students, and when black students do want to do something, like have their own fraternity or sorority, the question is asked, "Why? Why can't you just join the ones we already have?" The answer usually given is because we don't feel comfortable doing that, and I think that most of the time people realize that they haven't made us feel comfortable, but they may want to say that we are being exclusionary, when we want our own thing. So it's kind of like a Catch-22. I don't know what could be done to ease the tensions. I really don't know. It just really hard, because you don't feel comfortable doing one thing, so you try to do something for yourself, and people say that you are separating yourselves.

So, do you have any ideas?

Well, like I said, we talked to Dean Manning about this and I think we are going to be having some open forums or discussions.

Was he open to your suggestion?

Yeah, he was.

Is that going to influence the policy for next year?

I hope so. I really don't know.

So some of you still feel threatened about housing for next year?

A lot of us do. But, to ease the tensions, I know we are going to have an open discussion with faculty and administrators. And we are also going to have where students came come. Because a lot of times even when we have classes that address black issues, certain students will take them and certain students won't. So if you have an open forum discussion where everyone can attend, and I guess with a catchy title that's kind of controversial, you'll get the students who would never otherwise come. I think you can get a lot more accomplished that way.

What would your topics be?

Not just the housing issue, but social, academic — social, not only Greek, but interaction of student to student on a daily basis — things like that.

What about academics?

Well, there has been a problem, it seems, one of my roommates was telling me, that a lot of black students start with a certain major but never finish in that major. And I think the school is trying to figure out why that is.

So you and some of your fellow minority students are going to see to it that there's a forum and you've gotten that approved?

Well, we're talking to Dean Manning and I think we're going to meet with Dean Howison this Thursday to get everything finalized. We're hoping that it's sooner than winter term and we're hoping that this will be an ongoing thing while things are changing, just so that future black students will have something to help them out. Hopefully twice a year.

43. *Aside from the Honor System do you believe that the student Executive Committee, the Student Conduct Committee or other University judicial committees treat black and white students equally fairly? I really couldn't say because I haven't really had any experience with any of them.*

44. *Do you believe that the honor system is applied in an even-handed way to black and white students?*

Yes.

45. *How would you evaluate student publications (i.e. the Ring-tum Phi, the Trident, etc.), the student radio and television stations with regards to opportunities for black students to participate. I think they are pretty fair.*

How would you evaluate them with regard to their treatment of news about black students?

Unless it's controversial, it's kind of minimal. And even then, when it is covered, I think a lot of people don't take the time to read it or they read it but really it doesn't mean anything. Like the Ring-tum Phi recently had an article that said there are only 35 black students as undergrads, and I don't think that anyone really cared, except for the black students.

What gives you that impression?

No one really talked about it. Usually people really talk about articles. I was reading this at a Black History Month dinner, and right after reading that, a girl walked by and said, "What is the meaning of all this, the significance of all these decorations anyway." And, you know, I was thinking "Now, this is Black History Month."

46. *Do you feel that black students at Washington and Lee today have problems that are basically different from, or basically similar to those of whites? Please describe in what way you feel they are different or similar.*

Both. Similar I guess would be academic, and for a lot of people, money: if they are going to be able to afford this school or not. Different because for a lot of black student, they are the first to be going to college or to a good college. I think that sometimes there is a lot of pressure from black parents for their students to do well. I guess a lot of times this is pressure that we, as black students, place on ourselves, to do well in class.

- *47. Sex F
- *48. Age? 19
- *49. Year in college? SOPHOMORE
- *50. Cumulative grade point average [as of Fall 1996]? 2.103
- *51. How do you identify yourself in terms of nationality? AMERICAN

52. How do you identify yourself in terms of race? Black or African-American.
Do you prefer one or the other?
It doesn't matter.

53. *Are there additional comments you wish to make about any aspects of Washington and Lee?*

No, not really. I think it's a real good school. I think that tradition is a really good thing. However, I think that some traditions need to be It just bothers me that when a lot of people are rooted in a tradition and they don't really know why. I guess that one of the main things that bothers me is people's blatant use of Confederate flags and stuff, and they expect it to not bother you, when it does.

Why don't you describe, for the record, how it bothers you.

It's just one of those symbols that is not representative of the good things for me. Coming from Georgia, you have to see them all the time, but that doesn't mean that I'm used to it or that I like them. And I guess that stands for different things for different people, but you never know until you take the time to find out. And you can't find out from every single person exactly what it means. I just think it is very disrespectful when you know that this is not a homogenous society. For the most part it is, but there are some minorities here and I think that their feelings should be taken into consideration.

So the symbol to you means...?

Like the Old South, one that hopefully will never be revisited.

Why don't you spell out exactly what you mean by Old South?

.....places on bigotry, kind of a "you-know-your-place" attitude. But what is really ironic is that a lot of the girls here, the white females, have the attitude more than the guys, or they express it to — it's been expressed to me more by girls than from guys.

With a racial context or just an old world kind of — ?

Within a racial context. I guess just in talking to people, a lot of times guys are a lot more friendly than the girls are.

So in the interaction with the women on campus, you get the sense that they want you to "know your place"?

It's kind of more like that they'd rather not associate with you. That's why I think there are more black males in fraternities than there are black females in sororities. Because it's just easier. They are a little more accepting when it comes to certain things like that. Whereas the girls, I don't think, have gotten to that point yet. Because there are about 5 black males in fraternities, and there is only one black female in a sorority.