

### #39 INTERVIEW OF BLACK STUDENTS ENROLLED AT WASHINGTON AND LEE

1. Have you decided upon a college major?  
If yes, what?

Yes, Sociology.

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

Right now it's about a 3.0

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

BA

BS [science or commerce]

BA

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

I'm not sure. I think I'm going to do go into teaching and then go back and get my masters in social work.

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

yes

no

maybe

Yes

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 was. I did the day care and ushering at my church.

*And your denomination was..*

Baptist.

How would you characterize your church involvement in Lexington?

It's exactly what it could be with my schedule. I'm a member of the church here but I don't go as often as I did at home. And my Mom's not here.

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

They don't compare. I was in everything in high school. If I wasn't president, I was a member, in just about everything, and here I don't, I'm in about three organizations. Two, just two.

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

W&L literature

W&L admissions counselor

Relative  
Adult friend  
Peer  
Other

I was in college partnership program where we went to do a lot of colleges in Virginia, and this was one of them.

*a group of you went around to do different schools?*

Um hum, it was the Futures program. Yeah, we went around to do like here, Randolph Macon, schools in DC and I liked the campus and the people I just had fun here.

*Did you come for the summer program where you were here for a couple of weeks?*

I did come for the summer program.

*How many summers did you come.*

Two. After sophomore and junior years.

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

I wasn't at all.

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

If yes, under what circumstances?

Visited on your own

Participated in the Summer Scholar's Program

Visited during a Prospective Student Weekend

Other:

*You already answered this with the Futures program. Did you visit other times?*

No. Well yes, I did come up for a visit when they had a prospective weekend.

*Was that a particular minority weekend?*

I'm not sure. The person I stayed with was a minority and attended the things together. So I stayed with her and her friends ...

*Were there special MSA events for you?*

Yes.

*So, what was that weekend like.*

It was fun [voice somewhat qualified] I didn't get a chance to do see the whole campus because the person I stayed with didn't really, she didn't do much. I went to do class and then we went and sat in her friends' room and I was pretty bored actually.

*Did they have a party?*

They did have a party and I did go to do the party and that was probably the highlight. The most exciting thing that happened.

*What kind of feedback did you get from the minority students that were already here on campus?*

Nobody, everybody came, but nobody really seemed to do enjoy it.

*You mean they said they didn't enjoy it once they were students?*

Yeah. Everybody came for the money. But then I talked to do people who really enjoyed it.

*When did you discover that?*

At the party.

*What was your experience like when you were a futures student?*

Oh, I loved it. It was people from my area, a couple of people from my school, and we all came down and it was nice, cause I got to do know people from my area and so then after that we started hanging out at home.

And then the next week we all knew each other and we kinda hung around and tortured the teachers. And I felt really, I enjoyed it cause I felt like I was scared, I guess everybody was about going to do college and it was fun to do know I could actually do the work and it wasn't that hard. So, I enjoyed it.

Please describe your reactions to do this campus visit.

10a. Was W&L your...

First choice

Second choice

Third choice

Less than third choice

It was my first.

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

No other

One

Two

Three

Four

Five

Six or more

Five

10c. How many other colleges accepted you?

None

One

Two

Three

Four

Five

Six

All of them.

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

Relatives wanted you to do come here

Teacher advised you

Good academic reputation

Good social reputation

Offered financial assistance

Offers special programs you wanted

Tuition lower than similar colleges

High school guidance school counselor advised you

Private college counselor advised you

Wanted to do live near home  
Friend suggested attending  
Recruited by college representative  
Recruited by athletic department  
Graduates go to do top graduate schools  
Graduates get good jobs  
Religious affiliation or orientation  
Size of college  
Not accepted anywhere else  
Rankings in national magazines

The money. I got a good package. And also I really did like it. Cause I got - Actually Roanoke was my first choice. And I got a pretty package there too, I could have afforded to do go there too, but I liked this one. I thought it would be more challenging, and also it had a good reputation.

*You want to do glance at this list to do see if something jogs your brain about something else you thought about, or anything else that comes to do mind?*

My parents didn't really care. They just wanted me to do be happy. My teacher did say, like he was really surprised, my physics teacher.

*In what way was he surprised?*

When I told him I was think about going hee looked at me like, "You?"

*Why?*

I don't know. I wasn't doing too good in that class. That's probably why. I didn't know anything about the social life. I did want to do be near home. Hampton offered me an ROTC thing, but it was too far away and I didn't want to do have a commitment after. And the size. I liked it smaller.

*Were there other factors you considered in making the decision?*

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

I think they were impressed, and they were really proud.

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

I did have some people tell me "You're not going to do have anything to do do. It's an all white school." I was used to do it, so I just didn't really...

*Used to do what?*

To do being in a primarily white environment, so I didn't really - I felt that I would be OK, cause where I'm from... I knew it would bother me, but I figured it wouldn't be as important. I figured I'd be busy and I could make friends. I always had before.

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

Academically yes, and socially no.

*Tell me how it differed.*

It was worse than I had expected.

*In what way.*

It was a lot more conservative. I knew it was conservative, I guess I just didn't have any idea of what that really meant. I guess I'm used to do there being liberal people and conservative and moderate. And here it's mostly conservative and even moderates are in the minority. And that to

do me is very strange. It's very hard not to be able to do voice your opinion. I mean you can, but just knowing that there's people with completely different ideas who don't even consider diverging.

I never knew how important drinking would be. I knew that it would be a big part of the social life. I knew it would be there. I just didn't realize how important it would be to do so many people. I mean

I've had people say to do me that they're going to do start their kids drinking at really young ages. that they intended to do?

Yeah, maybe you shouldn't write that, cause there weren't very many people in the room when they said that.[She would prefer us to do delete this from the transcript]

I mean that there were people who started drinking at a really early age, and drinking was not a very big part of my family's social life. I mean it happened, but it was not a big deal. It's more the center of the social life here students around here attend.

*So that's really different.*

Yeah. It's really dull. I went all the way through high school watching people get drunk, and it looses it real fast, it's gone.

I didn't expect the teachers to do be as - I guess I expected the teachers to do be, to do expect you to do be independent and let you have leeway, but I thought it would work to do your benefit.

And sometimes it doesn't. People will just give you assignments and expect you to do know what you're doing. And sometimes you don't have a clue and they don't care. They tell you to do look it up or something.

the money system is very different here, I mean the cards instead of cash. that's different, I mean they don't have that in most schools - with it being as easy. Like I had thousands of dollars on my account that I can do whatever I want with. And that's real strange to do me, the amount of responsibility with that. you know, you can charge stuff home and stuff like that.

OK, that's all.

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 do be your greatest challenge at Washington and Lee.

How have you dealt with it?

*You're making faces.*

MMMM. I guess boredom. I'm really bored.

*In what realm of your life?*

I think it's because of my social activities, like with school, have diminished so much, I'm just really

You know, I'm in need of some kind of activity but I have to do work so hard that I can't, and then I waste time sometimes, so I guess that's a factor.

*So compared to do high school there's a lot less that's stimulating you...*

Yeah, but I would expect that. After high school you have to do buckle down, and with jobs, and in college. But I guess I didn't expect it to do be as soon, and it effects every part of your life. you know, socially it's kind of dull and academically it's so challenging, but not really as exciting

as I thought. Not hard, now - It's plenty hard, but just the excitement level. is not...

*And how do you deal with it?*

I talk on the phone - I mean I talk to do people. If you find common people, people you have common problems, it's easy to do deal with. You just find people who you can talk to do . Or you make yourself go out and do something, even if you don't think it's going to do be that exciting. Sometimes it turns out that little dumb things like bowling. Like we've done completely stupid things like run up and down the colonnade Things just lead to do things.- You just have to do make yourself be active.

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

Waaa. It's not as good. But I think I'm working twice, maybe three times as hard. It's really challenging. I think I took for granted in high school. I didn't study as much as ' I could have. I didn't really think.. I wasn't pressured, I thought, cause I just thought "I'll get into a college. And here, I'm here and I have to do at least do well enough to do get into grad school, wherever I'm going, so there's more pressure.

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

I used the Undergraduate library

Science library

Computer facilities.

Writing Center.

I haven't had a paid tutor, but my friends would help me out..

Study groups.

I've been to do a lecture

Language lab.

I visited professors, and I did take the Study skills course

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

Maybe just accessibility. Oh, publicity, they could publicize things more. Like the writing center, maybe they could have more hours. They could have tutors more advertized. But I think pretty much everything is pretty accessible.

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

*Promise of earning a handsome salary after graduation,*

*Interest in the particular academic discipline,*

*College friends recommended this major,*

*Adult relative recommendation etc.*

*Other*

I already knew what I wanted to do do when I got in. I always wanted to do do something with psychology. I always knew that I wanted to do work with people. For me just the obvious choice was psychology. But once I got in I realized maybe that wasn't the right thing.

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

If yes, please describe that change.

I just took a class, sociology class, and I really loved the professor and the material and I found that real interesting, and so that's why I switched.

*Because your interest shifted?*

I think I'm gonna double, or have one major and a concentration, cause I'm still interested in the other, but one of them's fascinating and the other in just kind of, it will get me where I want to do go.

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

I wouldn't know who to do report it to do. Yeah, I would, but I would want to do make sure first that it really was what I thought.

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

Please describe in what way they are easy or difficult.

Most of them I find are very easy to do approach and they'll make time for you, and even if they're really strict to do their office hours they'll let you make appointments. Most of them.

*And what are the others like?*

I've had professors that are just really hard to do approach. I guess everybody has that experience. Sometimes you just don't click, your personalities, or there are just teachers who are just...

Are those the ones that you were talking about earlier that leave you on your own and expect you...

No, no, cause I've found that sometimes those teachers are the ones that expect the most, but they also expect you to do do well. Like they want to do help you out. But I have had one teacher in particular who doesn't really care to do help people out. He always just says "It's in the book, it's in toe book." And he doesn't really want to do help. But that's an isolated incident.

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

Um hum.

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

[laughing] Is there a social life? Well, practically nonexistent.

*Did you drop in on fraternity things? It sounded like you did some because you know what it's like in terms of all the drinking...*

Yeah, um I do every once in a while, but it's just not very exciting to me. I don't really, I would rather go to a museum or go see a movie even. I'd rather be doing something active. I don't drink, so it's pretty dull.

*Did you feel welcome there?*

Um hum.

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

Not

*How important to you are drugs at a social event?*

If they're there then I'm not.

*Do you run across them and have to leave very often?*

No

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

Obviously I'm pretty selective about the Greek organizations that I visit, so I've had good experiences.

*How do you base your selectivity?*

Stereotypes.

*Just reputation..?*

Yeah, Well, I'm not going to be dropping by KA any time soon. But if I know people there, usually if I'm invited then I'll go. And if I know people that are in it then I'll go.

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

At the frats?

*Or sororities even. Just Greek organizations in general.*

I didn't rush or anything. I haven't had any experiences with sororities. But fraternities, they're all right. I haven't found anybody extremely rude, but then I don't go very much to the Greek parties.

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

I've taken phys ed. classes but I haven't gone to many of the games, except for the football games.

*So tell me about your experiences.*

I think the football games are underpopulated here. I'm ... never mind, I'm not going to say that.. But I guess maybe because it's division three, people don't get really excited about it, but still I think it's our home team. People should be more enthusiastic about it. That's for football. For volleyball, I went to a few of the games, and for basketball, but I just find them really underpopulated and hard to participate when you're one out of twelve people in the stands. It's hard to make a wave with twelve people, spread out around the stands.

*What about the facilities?*

I think they're really nice. Very accessible.

*And the phys ed classes?*

They're interesting.

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

[Laughing] I won't be... Opportunities ... I think there are opportunities out there, if I really wanted to go out, but I already have a pretty steady boyfriend. I'm not really interested in dating, but I have gone out on like dinner dates and stuff with people, and like movies and stuff.

*So when you said 'I won't be', you meant because you have a boyfriend?*

Yeah, I mean I'm practically engaged, so that kind of cuts down on your dating... But as for going out with people in groups with friends, that's fine. I don't have a big problem with that.

25. *Have you ever considered transferring from Washington and Lee to another college/university? Yes* [she did for first semester junior year, then came back because Mimi had made her promise she would come back and try it again - will graduate this year - private information]

*Why/why not?*

I wouldn't know where to begin.

*Well begin anywhere and keep going.*

OK, Maybe I thought of transferring to a school where the academics might be a little less strenuous, so that I could have more of a social life. I've thought of transferring to a university with a better social environment, like more diverse social environment. Maybe a place where I'd feel more comfortable because I was more ... you know I had better grades and I wasn't such a minority and I wouldn't ... You know... But for the most part I think you could fit in anywhere if you have, if you really want to. But here I have a hard time fitting in because ... there's not a lot to do here, that I want to do. I've thought about transferring to a bigger school with more opportunities and activities and stuff like that.

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

Um

*Or maybe you're not done deciding?*

I'm not.

*So you're not sure what you're going to do?*

Yeah. I think I want to graduate from here, but I mean I really think I'm going to, but I might take some time off or something, to do something else.

*So, is it appropriate for you to say what factors influenced you to stay - what factors would influence you to graduate from here?*

It used to be the reputation of the school, and I think that's still a factor, but I'm not sure if I'm going to be as proud to graduate from here as I thought I would be.

*Why's that?*

Because the more I learn about this university the less I really want people who know about it to associate me with the environment. But then, every individual has their own role.

*What do you mean?*

Like, there's things here that I don't approve of, and I don't think are respectable, like the honor's system. Supposed to be this really great thing, and it works to a certain point, but then there are issues and events that are completely overlooked, and

*Like what?*

[Chuckling]... um like sexual things that happen. Like rape and sexual violence and misconduct, and also like some of the fraternities and - I think there are unfair advantages to them, and some things that are obvious like the sexual misconduct and stuff that's completely overlooked cause it's not an honor's system ... But I've seen people get away with murder, and

*Numbers of examples?*

No, not numbers, but like separate events, and things I know people've done and have gotten away with. I just don't ... dishonorable things.

*Thanks for being more specific so people will know what you mean.*

Just like things like with the fraternities. Like one fraternity, they had illegal alcohol or something and they got put on probation for a Weekend, or something like that. Whereas if it was like somebody in their room they would have gotten kicked out of the dorms or something. Like little things that are unfair.

*Is that what you meant when you said unfair advantages?*

Yeah, unfair advantages are given and preferential treatment.

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

I have a work study job.

*If so, has this influenced your level of satisfaction at W&L?*

Not really. I enjoy my job, but ... What do you mean?

*I don't know, I didn't write the question.*

Um, .. a ..

*Do you think you're happier at W&L because you've had paid work to do? ... than you would have been if you didn't have the paid work?*

No. I mean I think it's good to have the opportunity to work and I enjoy it and my boss is a really great guy - so I guess so. I have like a mentor, talk to him...

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. because sometimes when you are recruited for a school they tell you that - only the good things, and I would kind a want to help people know the good and the bad, to like expose them to everything, keep my opinion to myself, and let them decide for themselves. ... I think it would be better to let them see everything and actually spend a weekend and see what it's really like on campus and see what the school work is really like - how much and - what there is to do socially. Because when I came I didn't really have really good experience and I had to made a whole bunch of assumptions because I wasn't exposed to...

*You meant you didn't have a very complete experience?*

Yes.

Now we ask some background information:

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

Country:USA

State:VA

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

Suburban

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

Suburban

*Predominantly*

White

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

Mother, father, sister and two brothers.

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

College and masters. My mother went to college and my father got a masters.

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

My Dad was a social worker and my Mom was in the Navy.

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 was middle class before I came here, so I guess I'm middle to lower now, well most people here are... I don't know. ... I assume most people here are pretty well off, so maybe I'm lower.

*How do you think this has affected your experience?*

I'm not really concerned with that kind of stuff, so it hasn't affected me, but it might have influenced people's perceptions of me...

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. I mean that's why I'm here, to be a student. So that's how I think of myself.

*Please explain.*

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.*

Racial identification's the same. No it's not... There are different levels. I think some people consider themselves just Americans. Some people consider themselves African Americans. Some people just Black. It's different. And there are some people that consider themselves Jamaican. You know, we're all the same color, it depends whether we're talking about color or nationality or ... It's different. Political perspective - pretty much the same. And I think we're all pretty much Democratic. A couple of Republicans that I know of. But I don't know that much about

people's political perspectives. And social class I think we're all pretty much equal.

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 we're ... I think it depends on the individual, so I can't really answer that question. I mean, I can't. I couldn't possibly answer that question.

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

Inadequate.

*Could you explain?*

I don't think there's enough of a population to make any extreme changes or to allow for branching out. There's so much that could be done on this campus and I don't think...

*Like what?*

Like awareness and things that need to come up - organizations, different things - I just don't think there's enough black people here to really influence the large majority of white people with the same kind of mind set. Cause there's only just, what, 40 of us, and That's not enough. People believe numbers, people are into numbers - that's the way people work and there's only 40 people out of how many people? It's not enough people, but I think if these people work together it could make for some changes. I don't think there's enough people to allow for sufficient social life.

I'm just answering the question, but I have to think about it as I go.

*Sure. Take your time.*

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

There's another question [!laughing] ... there's only One person!! It's not enough. No.

*Would you elaborate on that please?*

I just think that there could be more. I mean people say that they're trying to do ... increase diversity on campus, so why not start with the professors? It makes a big difference, you know. Even if there's just a few students, people have asked me, 'well how many professors are there?' Of even different origins, and .. I mean, I know a couple of Jewish professors, ... I just don't think there's enough diversity. ... There's just not enough diversity at all. You have to look at the administration. And there's only Dean McCloud and professor - I don't know his name, but the history guy, and who else, ,, then there's the people who work for the school. You know, like in the cafeterias or something, and cleaning up, and that says a lot. You can say that you're trying to increase diversity, but why not start at the top?

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

No, not enough

37. *Should the university offer activities designed to bring new black students together? If not, why not? If yes...do you have suggestions?...*

Yes.

*Why?*

So they have a good support group.

*Like when they come as freshmen?...*

Yeah, I think so, give you a chance to talk. I did that, but I don't think they should isolate people. Sause that can work two ways. If you get to know people who you automatically have something in common with and you're in the minority already - whatever the group is, even if it's just female. If a bunch of females walk in a room they'll automatically get together, but as long as you keep branching out. I think that's important.

*Well, think about that, maybe your answer then would be no. The question was should the university offer activities designed to get new black students together.*

No. I think it will just happen.

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

Yeah, when I first came here we all met there, and hispanic and Jamaican, well the minorities, we got together in the Chavis House. A place to hang out.

*When you first got here but not now?*

I don't really do much with them. But I still feel like I could go there.

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

Um hum. It has a lot of activities. It's good to see people are trying to do things to help on campus and I think it's a good idea for sure.

*Are you a member, Do you go?*

No, I don't. I went a lot last year, but not this year.

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, because I think people aren't very .. some people who come here think that .. the only association they have with black people is - black people or any minority work for them or you see them on the street, or in the news and they need to see minorities in general doing things for the culture.

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

Inadequate. Like the English courses I've taken, they were pretty good. The variety of people they offered was good, but I think sometimes they aren't addressing the issue they way they should be - they're like 'you black people' and everything starts off with slavery. It's always - after slavery they wrote this book. We can't do anything other than be slaves and talk in improper grammar. I don't think... I mean the style of writing that is used to stress the variety. .. they should have people with different education levels. social sciences.... I think it would be nice to have all kinds of people. I just think variety...

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

I guess for the teacher it's mostly the same. Students probably think so. Students probably see it completely - that would depend on the class and on your expertise. People kind of expect you not to do well. They expect you to be some kind of a genius cause you're black and you're in W&L.

*You've gotten that feedback from people, or you just get that feeling, or how does that happen?*

I don't know if it's just me, but in some of my classes people automatically think I'm a genius. I mean I got that in high school, but it's to a different level, I don't know what I'm talking about and people do that,. I guess cause they think if you say something then you know what you're talking about. I know what I'm talking about, but I didn't write the book for goodness sake. People ask me questions like I could explain the book in three seconds. Then I get some people who are just ignorant. Like you're not there, people sometimes act like you're not there, like they say really inconsiderate things, but they say that about everything. The people here, I've found that they know no black people and don't know what to say, or what not to say, or they have no...

*What kind of ignorant things do they say?*

I had one English class where we were reading something by Langston Hughes, I Am America, or America I Am... anyway, it talked about a darker brother, and the girl automatically assumed.. The darker brother has to go to the kitchen ... this was in the story, when company comes I have to leave... she automatically thought that this was a black guy living in a white family and that he had to go because they were ashamed of having black people eat at their house. She said something like 'Well in the story in the South slaves could eat with the family, but if company came they had to go. And then the teacher broke out with 'no this is just the darker skinned brother of a family of black people.' People have all these stereotypes about black people in general, and I thought - 'It says a darker brother,' and she jumped to a whole other level with it and I thought 'where do you get that?' People have certain assumptions I think. It could be just that I'm paranoid. I am more aware here of being black than I am anywhere

else I've ever been.

*Why is that do you think?*

Because it's such an issue. Somebody was telling me that. A white guy was telling me that. And it does shock the heck out of me. He was telling me - well we're from the same area and I was saying that I never thought about... I mean I knew that I was black. I thought about who I was as a black person, but I never realized that it made - it didn't - it never made such an important difference in how I related to people as when I got here. Maybe I was just ignorant, maybe I just never thought of it that way, but I don't think it's ignorance. I think color's such a silly thing. I have white friends who listen to the same music, I have friends from all different races and I try to be able to associate with all of them in the same way. I don't act differently around anybody, and sometimes people may not like that, because they may not think that I'm acting black or whatever, but I don't think there's a certain way of acting black. I am black. So any way I act is acting black. Here, it's not like that. People get surprised if you can pronounce your name mad spell it. People act like there's a set role they expect you - to be ignorant or jump up in their face if they say something, or whatever. Sometimes - maybe it's just because I'm a minority here and I feel like I have to defend my race, but I don't necessarily like that. I would like just to go to class, have friends, do what I would do and

*What was it this white person was saying that shocked you?*

He was saying (I tend to ramble) he was saying that you can't not be aware of color here. He said it wasn't possible to not be aware of being black here because, and this is from a white guy!, I was like... but he was saying because this school is historically a certain way. The fact that there's so few black people now. It's like an issue. People notice it because there are so few. And I was thinking, you know, he's right. There's so many traditions here that are prejudiced that it's ridiculous. there's so many - for example, KA, was founded here.

*Really?*

Yeah. In fact the dorm was started in the Math building, there's a plaque there or something, I could be completely wrong about this, but that used to be a dorm, and I think the people who started KA as a little small organization started it here. He was telling me about this thing where KA used to have their Southern Ball and every year they would hire black kids from the neighborhood - have you heard about this -

*Yeah, but tell it.*

Yeah. They would hire black kids from the neighborhood for like a buck a piece or five bucks a piece, throw cotton on their front lawn and yell stuff at them, with their dates, as the kids picked up cotton from their front yard. And I was dumbfounded. I'm supposed to go here and tell my friends that I graduated from a school that founded ... a university that supported the founding of such an organization. There's a woman's group on campus that can't get support to be a panhellenic association because they don't have enough people or something stupid like that. Psi Pi Psi - All they want to do - it's like a non-sorority sorority kind of thing cause they don't have dues and they don't have like pledging - well they kind of have pledging, but they don't have - it's not the traditional sorority, but they can't get funded. And they're not doing anything but promoting sisterhood without fees. 'We're not going to penalize you ig..' It's just a friendly thing, and I'm supposed to hold my head up and not be a little ticked off. That was in the past, I realize, - the KA stuff, but there's still the attitudes and still the people who won't talk to me if there's certain people around.

*Really. They talk to you sometimes, but they don't talk to you other times.*

Yeah. And I'm not the most stylish person on campus, and I'm not the most beautiful person in the world, but I'm still a good person and I'm always a good person. Whether so-and-so's around or not. That type of thing.

*So you're more embarrassed about the school now than you were at first.*

I didn't realize that kind of stuff when I... I knew it went on historically, but I guess some things change faster and slower than than time and tradition.

*And with this one, it sounds like you're having personal experiences.*

And then I hear stuff too, but ....

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

I usually try to get somebody in the class to help me. Or talk to the teacher.

*OK, but the problems they are talking about are about the climate in the classroom.*

Oh, I forgot. I usually just try to address it. If somebody has a personal problem with me I'll ask them if they have a

problem and if they don't and they're still acting simple then I just separate myself from them. I don't try to - I try not to let it ... I'm ready to learn. Try not to worry about it.

*And you haven't had problems with the professors in the classroom?*

No, I only had that one professor here who just had a problem.

*Was that related to you as a black student or just students in general?*

I don't know.

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

*How can the role of this Office be improved?*

I don't know. I guess just to recruit and to bring in more black students. I think they're trying to bring in more students.

*Did you know that that's the name of Dean McCloud's office?*

Oh, No I didn't.

*OK, so do you know the role of Dean McCloud's office?*

Um um.

*What would you like to see it be? The question is how can the role of this office be improved. - Since you don't know what it is, what would you like it to be?*

Well, I would like to see her do something like that, be an advocate between the black students and the administration, or ... it would be nice if she came to the MSA meetings - It would be nice if she went in and tried to see what was going on with the black students in general, but she doesn't do that.

*Are you saying you feel that she isn't in touch with the students?*

Yeah. I'm not trying to get her fired, ... but it would be nice if somebody was there who did more than just say they were working for minorities. I only know that with me she hasn't been that. As far as Minority Affairs, I didn't even know about her before I got here. And she didn't really do anything until - I had a bad first semester and I had to go in and talk to her. But that didn't have anything to do with being black.

*What do you mean you had to go in and talk to her? Did someone send you in to talk to her?*

Yeah. I think so. I think she called me. So I guess she was kind of trying, if she did, I don't remember how. No, it wasn't her. Somebody told me that she was the person to talk to for study skills. And then when I got in there she asked me questions about being a minority, but I told her I was having problems and she told me to get counseling, so I thought... So I haven't had a real good relationship with her. I've had more - There is a lady here, named Barbara Hubbard, and she's the secretary in the Geology department, and she's black and I've had a really good time talking with her and her husband. She's a great lady. I don't know Mr. DeLaney at all. Other than that, the people I go to for advice are white. Not a big deal, but I wouldn't go to Dean McCloud.

*Just because you don't think you'd get results?*

I don't. I just, I didn't feel like she - She was doing her job, I realize, but I didn't feel an extremely strong connection with her just because she's black, so ... It's not like I would go talk to her just cause she's black. I wouldn't do that with anybody, cause they were female, or ... I go to people I can talk to and I don't think she's one of those people.

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.)*

I think that's really... There's one white male teacher. My boss is pretty good too. And there's a white female too that helped recruit me, and that would be... the person who recruited me, but she's the President's wife, and then that's all. And my friends.

*Situations...*

Mostly for stress.

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

I don't know. I don't want to answer that question.

42. *Have you experienced any discriminatory behavior on campus directed against yourself?*  
Have you experienced any discriminatory behavior on campus directed against yourself?

Nothing like the graffiti. I have had, I haven't had anything obvious like graffiti or anything like that. I haven't heard anybody call me anything to my face. The only like really obvious like blatant thing, like subtle things - I'm used to people, when they walk into a room. I'm used to people automatically looking at me. I don't know what it is, but people will look at the person who looks the most mysterious or something. I think it's the glasses. People usually look at me. I've never had somebody walk into a room here and automatically picked me to talk to. Even if I'm in charge. Like when I'm at work, I'll be doing something behind the desk and there's nobody there and people will walk in and not say anything. Students and grownups. I've had grownups like talk to me like I was a kid. Like do you think you can do this. And I'm like 'as soon as you leave I'll get it done.' Once I went to get a parking pass for one of my friends, and she was white, my best friend, but anyway I asked for the parking pass and they looked at her and asked her what building she lived in. Like I couldn't be a student there. Like, she was wearing a sweater and stuff, I was all grubby. It was Saturday morning. I was just amazed. I came in and asked for the parking pass. I told them where I wanted to park, and they looked at her and asked her where she was.

*Was she a student too?*

No, she goes to another school! I mean, that's not... Other than that.. I've seen stuff. Like, people were playing basketball in the gym, and they'll be students, white students and black students, and they'll ask the black students for their IDs. I've seen that.

*That was security again?*

Um hum, or it was a teacher, of someone setting up something, maybe a coach or something. ... Oh, oh, people in town, does that count? People in town follow me around, I've never had that experience before. till I came here. I went into this store, and it was one of the little boutique stores in town, and the lady like followed me - it was a little nick-nack store, but the lady like followed me around. I could not believe it! I'd heard of stuff like that, but I had never actually seen it. She was acting like she was cleaning, and I was amazed. I was in one section and she was fine, I walked to the next and she was like, all of a sudden she was on it. She had to clean this vase. It was like 'I don't want your stuff, sorry.' But I just thought that was funny.

*What form did that behavior take (written remarks including graffiti, spoken remarks, physical assault, discriminatory treatment).*

*Who was responsible for that behavior?*

*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?*

No.

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 don't know. I don't know. I mean there's always times that you might think somebody's treating you differently because you're black. There's only the cafeteria lady. The co-op lady who always checks my stuff, and drives me crazy. Might be because I'm black, might be just because she's suspicious.

*What do you mean?*

I buy stuff at random times when I'm in the co-op. I may grab something and swipe my card so I can eat it when I'm on the way, and then I go up and tell people what I have. And this lady, no matter what I do, and tell her what I have, and she always assumes that whatever I'm eating has not been paid for. I went up today in fact. I'd paid for breakfast, and then had some chips - breakfast and a sandwich, and then I went up and bought a pack of gum and I said it's a pack of gum and a drink.. . and She said 'and a turkey sandwich?' and I said, "No, I've already paid for the turkey sandwich," and she goes, 'Oh, OK. Have a nice weekend.' And I was like.. you know, Why am I going to hold this in your face and say 'I'm not paying for it.' I mean, she might be that way with everybody. I don't know.

*Yeah, so anyway, this question is about the student judicial committees...*

Um, maybe not directly. Like I say, I know people who know people. Or people in like fraternities that get special treatment. But, since a lot of us are not in fraternities...

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

Sure.

*Are you saying that to be quick, or...*

No I really do. I haven't had any problems with the honors system, except for. Well you know ... Ooh there was that one last year... I'd say 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're fair.

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

I think it's OK. Like I said it may be just paranoia, but sometimes I think they address black issues in a derogatory manner. Maybe that's because the school's so conservative. They just see things a certain way. And it might just be that black people don't ... You know like when Spike Lee came. That was a pretty big thing for like the black students here, and he was like completely dogged, I thought. It's good that Spike Lee came, or Martin Luther King's daughter, when she came, it wasn't like it's good. That wasn't in any of the papers that I saw. It could be just that... I know, I don't actually know about the, if they're fair. I don't know. But it just seems to me that there's always a negative slant on anything the black's support here. Like, black people did this.. but this happened... you know, like the negative things...

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.*

Similar academically. Socially they're probably not. I don't think I have the same problems... As far as grades they're the same. Social different. I don't know a huge amount of people very well, but like I have different problems. I don't care if my socks don't match, but you know, for some people you've got to get the right pair. Little dumb things. Similar and different. I think just that people are different. Socially I think they're different, because a lot of people who are black came here from New York, or Maryland, or DC, and it's not the same. It's just a total change, and there are those students who came from cities who are white here, but I think it's easier for them maybe to get used to it because they do have fraternities and sororities. For students who don't hang out in fraternities and sororities it's more of a problem, no matter what color you are.

*So not matter what color you are the social difficulties would be the same.*

Yeah

Am I babbling too much?

*No. It's very interesting.*

OK

*Anything more about this?*

I don't think there's the same comfort level. Politically, any liberal is going to get the same kind of treatment.

*What is that?*

Same kind of - you don't have the same problems if you're a liberal.

*How are liberals treated?*

First you're in a minority. Your ideas aren't as respected. There might be a problem with the comfort level here. I know for myself, I don't feel comfortable here as say one of my friends who is in the same financial situation or the same family background. We're very similar, but we just have different experiences because people will treat me differently than they treat her and we'll be together. It offends her as much as it offends me. But she has the ability if she just wants to walk away. And say, well I can just fit in. I don't get that because ... But, see, everything I said, it really depends on the individual, because if I were to join a sorority and if I drank and if I chose to I could fit in

here. I just, I'm very happy with who I am and I don't necessarily fit.... I could not be offended when people say, 'Oh, you're different.'

*Do you think people saying 'oh you're different' happens to white independents as much as black independents?*  
Yeah.

*Sounds like you have white friends who are independents as well.*

Yeah, they're outcasts as well. It really depends on who you hang out with. Everything is relative. I could just decide to start drinking and just,... I could work a whole lot harder at it. I wouldn't be me, but I think if people really wanted to fit in here you could - they don't completely - but you could make it a lot easier on yourself by conforming. But that's anybody.

*Sounds like some of the conforming you're talking about would be compromising yourself. If you decided to drink a whole lot that would be compromising yourself.*

Yeah. I mean there are a certain type of people who come here that are drinkers, they're joiners, they're socialites, and so ... I think for minorities there is the added problems, but it's a difficult environment. But people talk to me and I find that they have a lot of the same problems, no matter what their color is. They just have the same problems. So ultimately, like I did when I was at home, I still believe that color doesn't, well it shouldn't matter.

- \*47. Sex F
- \*48. Age? 19
- \*49. Year in college? SOPHOMORE
- \*50. Cumulative grade point average [as of Fall 1996]? 2.335
- \*51. How do you identify yourself in terms of nationality? AMERICAN
52. How do you identify yourself in terms of race?  
I'm black.
53. Are there additional comments you wish to do make about any aspects of Washington and Lee?  
No.