

[MUSIC PLAYING]

CORDEL FAULK: Hi. I'm Cordel Faulk, assistant dean and chief admissions officer at the University of Virginia School of Law. In this episode of *Law Schooled*, we talked to Risa Goluboff, dean of the University of Virginia School of Law and noted legal historian. Dean Goluboff discusses opportunity, and being the first female dean of law school. She tells us about how her college experiences broaden her perspective beyond her Jewish Northeastern upbringing, and reflects on how some of her preconceptions about UVA shifted after she came to work here. Admissions director Ashley Merritt joins us, too.

Thank you very much for joining us today on the podcast.

RISA GOLUBOFF: Thanks for having me. I'm really excited to be here.

CORDEL FAULK: This feels like it's a crossover podcast.

RISA GOLUBOFF: Should I be doing some PR for our law school podcast?

ASHLEY You should plug it.

MERRITT:

RISA GOLUBOFF: All right. There's a new law school podcast. And we don't have a name yet, so--

CORDEL FAULK: We don't have a name yet for this, either.

RISA GOLUBOFF: Let's get that part in. OK, so don't put that part in. But there's a new law school podcast. We've got our first season that's going to hopefully launch in February. And the theme of that season is the future of law. And it should be really exciting. You should tune in. You hear a lot of our faculty members, and then some practitioners, and some other famous people.

CORDEL FAULK: Oh. That sounds like a tease. That sounds like a tease.

ASHLEY That's a tease.

MERRITT:

[LAUGHTER]

CORDEL FAULK: Well, thank you for joining us today. Let's just start by answering the question, who is Risa

Goluboff.

RISA GOLUBOFF: Ha. Risa Goluboff. That's me. Who am I? Is that the question? I am the dean of UVA Law School. This my third year as dean. It is my 18th year on the faculty. So I moved to Charlottesville in 2002 with my husband. We came to UVA together to join the faculty as brand new law professors.

CORDEL FAULK: Newly minted.

RISA GOLUBOFF: Newly minted! It was our first academic jobs. And we moved--

CORDEL FAULK: Whoa. First connotes a second. We want this to be your academic job. We don't want you going anywhere else.

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

RISA GOLUBOFF: We came here to our first and our only academic jobs. We have visited a little bit at a few other law schools over the years, but always come back. And this is our home. And so we were on the faculty together for a number of years. And then 2 1/2 years ago, I became the dean. I don't know if that's who I am. That's a little bit of a bio. I'm also a mother. I have two kids. They are a 15-year-old girl and a 12-year-old boy. I'm originally from New York, so moving to Charlottesville was a move south, though I had spent a lot of time in the South before.

I'm from a big, loud Jewish, New York family, and creating my own loud New York family, although my kids are born Virginians, and proud to be. And I'm proud that they're born Virginians, and big Cavaliers fans in general. Yeah.

CORDEL FAULK: So when I when I do the admissions interviews, I always ask, what would you like to be doing in 10 years? And almost everyone talks about, well, you might like to have a family. And they go into that a little bit. And then they almost always apologize for it. And I'm like, no, don't apologize for that. That should be a part of your life.

RISA GOLUBOFF: Of course.

CORDEL FAULK: And if it's important to you, that's of course something you should say in the interview. But I always think it's funny. Almost everybody apologizes for that.

RISA GOLUBOFF: That's interesting. I don't apologize.

CORDEL FAULK: You shouldn't.

RISA GOLUBOFF: I will say one of the classes that my husband and I teach-- we co-teach it. UVA has these wonderful, as you know, seminars on ethical values that are courses with 12 usually third year students. Pass fail, one credit over the course of a year. You meet five times, almost always in the faculty member's house. And they're kind of book clubs between faculty and students, and on a topic that may be legal, but can be ethical, moral, beyond the regular law school curriculum. And so we have taught one almost every year for the past 17 years on work/life balance.

And the first time we taught it, the very first session, I was pregnant. The second session, we were rocking our baby

CORDEL FAULK: Right, yeah.

RISA GOLUBOFF: But the third session, she was screaming in the monitor. And then the fourth session, she was now sleeping through the night. And over the years, that has really changed them. For a long time, the kids would, you know, stay up and we'd say, you can wait for three students to arrive, and then we're putting you to bed. And then for a while, they would, you know, sit with the students while eating dinner. And then we would put them to bed. And now we have to coax them out of their rooms to come down and say hi to the students, because they're teenagers and not as interested.

But over the 17 years, you know, we have this whole group of students who we've talked to about work/life balance. They're about to go into the work world. And we get emails all the time from these students. And they tell us, wow, I still think about your course, or this is what I do now, and now I'm married with kids, or now I'm doing this. And I just got one last week from somebody who graduated last year who said, I was just reading this article. And it seemed perfect for the seminar on ethical values, so I wanted to send it to you. So we keep in touch with them a lot.

And somebody once described in a course evaluation, they said, it's sort of a mix between a book club and a support group.

[LAUGHTER]

And we're very open about our challenges, you know, in having a life and having careers. And so we encourage our students to be, also, and we want it to be something that's going to stay

with them, you know, when they go out into the world.

CORDEL FAULK: So I'm going to ask you the core question in a minute.

RISA GOLUBOFF: Yeah.

CORDEL FAULK: So tell us some about the back story leading up to you making the decision to become a law professor. Who were you? Where were you? I'm coaxing you to talk about the-- you basically have the EGOT of academic resumes, with your degrees.

RISA GOLUBOFF: That's very sweet. OK. I grew up in New York. And I grew up in a very, kind of, socially aware family, and always was thinking about politics, and the world, and social justice. And there's a story that my great grandmother was a friend of Ethel Rosenberg.

CORDEL FAULK: Oh, jeez. I don't know-- Wait, wow.

RISA GOLUBOFF: Her husband was a numbers runner. So they were an interesting pair. He was a real capitalist, and she was a real communist. So I grew up with that kind of history in my head. Went to college at Harvard, where I loved my academics. I loved writing papers. I loved the intellectual life. And I also loved my extracurricular activities, which were mostly public service and social justice oriented. And when the moment came to think about what next, and what kind of graduate school or professional school, I was really torn, because I loved the life of the mind.

I really wanted to go to graduate school in history. I was a history and sociology major. And at the same time, I didn't want to be in the ivory tower. I wanted to be a force for good in the world. I wanted to make change. And never before that moment had there been a conflict, right? I did my schooling, and I did my extracurriculars. And suddenly, there was this conflict. And so I decided not to address the conflict right then. And I applied to both graduate school in history and law school. I didn't have a total plan for how they were going to combine.

CORDEL FAULK: Had you chosen your academic area of focus at that point?

RISA GOLUBOFF: Yeah. So I had written my senior undergraduate thesis on civil rights.

CORDEL FAULK: So that had been sparked.

RISA GOLUBOFF: That had been sparked. That was sparked as a sophomore-- actually, sparked as a freshman. I took required expository writing. And actually, I look back on this and I think, one could write a straight line through my past that would be straighter than I expected, because expository

writing at Harvard U, you choose a kind of topic. And the topic I was in was called history before the bar. It was a legal history expository writing class. But I chose it kind of out of thin air. And at the time, when I was in the class, I didn't think, oh, this is what I want to do. I really never thought that for a long time.

But there was a guest speaker, a guy named Jim Goodman, who is now a history professor at Rutgers who wrote this book called *Stories of Scottsboro* about the Scottsboro boys and the Scottsboro trial in 1931, Alabama. Nine African-American young men were falsely accused of rape by two white women, and railroaded and convicted. And their cases, actually, ended up being very important Supreme Court cases about criminal procedure, several of them. And they were eventually let out of prison. But he wrote this book that took the perspective of all the different actors in the story, and took all of their perspectives. And each chapter goes from a different perspective. So the young man, and the two women who falsely accused them of rape, and the white Southerners, and the NAACP, and the Communist Party. And it's just an incredible book.

And before that moment, I came from this, you know, New York, Eastern European, Jewish immigrant place. And I had a certain understanding of race, and of our past, and our past as a country. And in my introduction to the *Stories of Scottsboro*, I suddenly realized, you know, wow, we live in a big country. And wow, there are so many stories. There are so many ways of being an American that I'd never really thought about. Particularly, I was really interested in the South, and race in the South.

CORDEL FAULK: At its best, that's what college does.

RISA GOLUBOFF: Yes. Oh, totally. It opens up your whole horizon. And I actually had a history teacher in high school who was supposed to teach American history. And he said, I don't know how to teach people this class. You know, you live in New York City, which is nothing like the rest of the country. And you go to this school. I went to this alternative hippie school, which is nothing like anything. So I'd like to put you in my car drive you across the country, but he couldn't. And he did a good job. But this was really the moment where I realized how different the world looked out there. And I spent the summer after my sophomore year in college in rural North Carolina doing organizing work. And then--

CORDEL FAULK: Did it strike you how important that moment was and as it was happening?

RISA GOLUBOFF: Yes.

CORDEL FAULK: Did it feel profound?

RISA GOLUBOFF: It felt profound. And I mean, he came in. We read his book in manuscript, actually. The book wasn't out, yet. So he came in and shared parts of his manuscript with us, which is entirely to his credit, and to the credit of my expository writing professor. And so just as an aside, this is not linear

[LAUGHTER]

CORDEL FAULK: It's more linear than you think it is. I think it's more linear than it felt for you as it happened.

RISA GOLUBOFF: So we read it in manuscript. And it felt like such a discovery, right? We were discovering this thing that the world didn't know about, yet. And then it was a discovery to me. And at the moment, it wasn't particularly legal. There are obviously legal parts to the book. But it was really about how different races interacted in American history, in a place that was so totally different from New York City. And one more aside, there was a Broadway show about Jelly Roll Morton, the musician. Gregory Hines plays Jelly Roll Morton. And he comes to New York City from New Orleans. And somebody asked him what he is.

And I can't remember exactly, but he says maybe he was a quadroon, or an octoroon, right, something that was very specific about his racial makeup. And the person looks at him and says, I don't know what you're talking about. In New York, we have three kinds. We have Jews, Italians, and Blacks. Which one are you? And he says, OK, I'm black. So he was negotiating that change, too. So I really did a lot of thinking about American history, and race in American history. And had a dual major. I was an American history major and a sociology major, because I wanted to study our history, but I also wanted to theorize about it. I wanted to understand what our social structures look like, and how they got that way.

And so I spent that summer after my sophomore year in college in rural North Carolina. And then I wrote my senior thesis on the civil rights movement on John's Island, South Carolina, which is one of the Sea Islands.

CORDEL FAULK: Oh, yeah.

RISA GOLUBOFF: And I took a semester off from college.

CORDEL FAULK: I didn't know this part. Really?

RISA GOLUBOFF: So actually, there was a moment of conflict earlier between my scholarship and my public service orientation. So I applied at the end of my junior year for two things to do that summer. I applied for the New York City Government Scholars Program, which is a program in New York City where they place students with different offices of the mayor's office in New York. And there are seminars attached to it. And I got that. And then I also applied for funding to do research for my senior thesis on John's Island. And I got that.

And so I decided that the way to handle that problem was to do the Government Scholars Program over the summer, and take the fall off, and take my grant money and go down to South Carolina in the fall. My parents were initially very unhappy about this. You know, you don't take time off. You're going to lose your momentum. Why would you leave school? Then when I described why I was, my mom was like, oh, OK. So that was a moment where I faced this dilemma. And my answer was both.

CORDEL FAULK: That should be a lesson to everybody listening. The answer can be both. If you think about it and you plan, the answer can be both.

RISA GOLUBOFF: I agree. And I actually-- we can come back to this later, but I think both is often the answer at UVA Law School.

CORDEL FAULK: Yeah.

RISA GOLUBOFF: So then when I was applying to graduate school, I knew I was planning to do American history PhD in civil rights related history. If you pressed me on how I thought my history graduates-- So first of all, I would say I knew I wanted to go to law school. And I thought--

CORDEL FAULK: Wait. When did that happen? We haven't gotten there yet. When did you decide you wanted to go to law school?

RISA GOLUBOFF: I mean, I think it just was always there. I don't think it was a thing I necessarily decided. I think it was, to me, in my public service and my social justice work, it always seemed like law school was the way to continue to do that. So I knew that.

And I thought, if the worst thing that happens is I go to history graduate school for a few years, and someone pays me a pittance, but pays me, to read history, and then I go become a lawyer? That's OK with me. I'll enjoy that. But if you'd asked me, you know, how will these two

things combine, I would have said I would like to be a public interest lawyer and do social histories that are related.

So the example that comes to mind is, I worked after my first summer. I split all my summers. So one of my summer jobs was-- Half of my summer, my first summer after law school, after my first year of law school, was Florida Rural Legal Services, where I did representation of migrant farm workers. And so I would've said, I'd like to be a lawyer in a place like Florida Rural Legal Services and do oral histories of the farm workers, and write a history of the East Coast migrant labor stream of Belle Glade, Florida where Florida Rural Legal Services was. That was where the hub was.

So I would have thought something like that. That's a hard career path. I wish you all, if that's what you want to do, go do it. Ultimately, I found other ways of combining. And I didn't end up doing that. But probably what I would have said at that moment. But I didn't have a clear view. I knew these were two things I wanted to do, and I would figure out what it looked like to integrate them as I did.

CORDEL FAULK: Why did you choose UVA Law?

RISA GOLUBOFF: Oh, wait, I'm going to finish the story.

CORDEL FAULK: OK.

RISA GOLUBOFF: Is that OK?

CORDEL FAULK: Yeah. That's great. Please.

RISA GOLUBOFF: Otherwise, we don't get my places in.

CORDEL FAULK: Oh, got you. OK.

ASHLEY EGOT.

MERRITT:

RISA GOLUBOFF: What is EGOT?

CORDEL FAULK: Oh, it's Emmy, Grammy, Oscar, Tony.

RISA GOLUBOFF: I see.

[LAUGHTER]

Is that a small list?

CORDEL FAULK: Yes, it's a very small list.

RISA GOLUBOFF: Who's on it that you can think of?

ASHLEY John Legend, I think.

MERRITT:

CORDEL FAULK: Whoopi Goldberg is on it. Rita Moreno is on it.

RISA GOLUBOFF: That's a good list.

CORDEL FAULK: I don't know why Rita Moreno always comes to mind on that.

RISA GOLUBOFF: We were just watching *West Side Story*.

CORDEL FAULK: I can't remember the others. But it is a very small list.

ASHLEY Because I think you have to get the T. Broadway.

MERRITT:

CORDEL FAULK: The G is sometimes hard.

RISA GOLUBOFF: Yeah.

ASHLEY Oh, if you're an actress.

MERRITT:

RISA GOLUBOFF: Yeah. OK. So I applied to both graduate school and law school, straight from college. And I actually decided to go to Yale Law School, and deferred for two years to start my graduate program at Duke. That was my plan. I was going straight to my PhD program in history at Duke.

CORDEL FAULK: They have an excellent history department.

RISA GOLUBOFF: They have a great history department. Southern

CORDEL FAULK: History.

RISA GOLUBOFF: Civil rights history.

CORDEL FAULK: Right.

RISA GOLUBOFF: And then I got a Fulbright to South Africa. And so I asked Duke if I could defer for a year and go to South Africa. And the way their admissions and their fellowships work, they couldn't allow me to do that. So I instead went to South Africa and asked Yale if I could come a year sooner, and thought, I'll start law school first. Started law school. Then I reapplied to graduate schools. And by that time, I was a little bit older. I wanted to stay in the Northeast. And I was becoming more of a legal historian than a social historian. And I decided to go to Princeton, which has a phenomenal history program, and a great legal historian, Dirk Hartog who became my dissertation advisor.

And so I ended up going to law school for two years, going to Princeton, going to graduate school for two years, going back, finishing law school. Then I clerked for Guido Calabresi on the Second Circuit for a year, and then clerked for Justice Breyer on the Supreme Court for a year, and then came to Charlottesville.

CORDEL FAULK: Why? Why did you choose UVA Law?

RISA GOLUBOFF: So I'm going to answer that question with a story, partly because I'm a historian.

CORDEL FAULK: I was hoping you were going to do that.

[LAUGHS]

RISA GOLUBOFF: When I think about why I chose UVA Law, I have a very particular image in my head.

CORDEL FAULK: Right.

RISA GOLUBOFF: So when you decide you want to be a law professor, you sign up on an electronic database that the American Association of Law Schools holds. And you send your information to all 200 law schools around the country through this database. And then the ones who are interested in you set up a half hour interview for you at a big hotel in Washington DC. They all meet there.

CORDEL FAULK: That's pressure filled.

RISA GOLUBOFF: It's often called the meat market. It's not dissimilar to on-grounds interviewing, on-campus

interviewing, right? And so Rich and I went on the market at the same time. So we had many, many interviews, because we were trying to land, if not in the same institution, at least in a locale that we could both be together. So I think I had 25 or 30 interviews.

CORDEL FAULK: That seems like a lot.

RISA GOLUBOFF: It was a lot. And you're running around the hotel, because they don't figure in any movement time. So one interview ends at the 30, and the next one starts at the 30. You're literally running around. And it's one of these hotels that have different elevator banks for the south wing and the north. I mean, it's just crazy. So I'm running around. And you go to some interviews. So maybe I can't tell the story publicly. After I tell it, you'll talk about it.

CORDEL FAULK: OK.

RISA GOLUBOFF: So you go to some interviews. And people are lovely.

CORDEL FAULK: Right.

RISA GOLUBOFF: But they're not, like, pushing you on your scholarship. And they're not really asking the deep and the hard questions. And then you go to some interviews that are very rigorous, and they're pushing you hard. But maybe they misunderstand the relationship between rigor and meanness. And so they're kind of mean, right? They're pushing you hard, but they're mean. And I will never forget my half an hour with UVA Law School. I could tell you who was on my committee. I could tell you where they were sitting in the room. I could tell you how the room was organized. I couldn't tell you that about any other of my interviews.

But that interview was the only one where people were warm, and nice, and lovely, and rigorous, and pushing, and hard, and constructive. And I walked out of the room, and I thought, that's the place.

CORDEL FAULK: OK. Let me ask you this. So what was your feeling about Virginia before that, because you didn't apply as a student.

RISA GOLUBOFF: That's true.

CORDEL FAULK: So this was this was a moment for you where, oh, this was something I hadn't thought about before. And you walk out, you're like, this is the place. What was--

RISA GOLUBOFF: Yes. So I'll say two things about that. The first one, I didn't apply to UVA. My prejudices-- I will

call them prejudices, because I think they were unfounded, as I later learned-- were that UVA was Southern, and conservative, and--

CORDEL FAULK: The first one is fair, the second one isn't.

RISA GOLUBOFF: Well, I think I had Southern in my head as a particular kind.

CORDEL FAULK: That's not uncommon.

RISA GOLUBOFF: And not Jewish, right? I had a kind of homogeneous understanding that was not me.

CORDEL FAULK: Correct.

RISA GOLUBOFF: That was basically what it was. I thought it was a particular kind of place, and it wasn't for me.

CORDEL FAULK: To be fair to you on that, if you look back at UVA 50 years ago, that wouldn't have been wrong.

RISA GOLUBOFF: OK, but I was applying--

CORDEL FAULK: I know. no. What I'm saying is there had been a lot intervening-- A lot had changed at UVA intervening, but that had been presented to you.

RISA GOLUBOFF: And reputation is always right, right?

CORDEL FAULK: Correct. And it's hard. Just to be fair to you--

RISA GOLUBOFF: That's right.

CORDEL FAULK: --the reputation was lacking at that point.

RISA GOLUBOFF: And I didn't know better.

CORDEL FAULK: Exactly. You had a change when you had the interaction, which is what we find a lot when folks interact with us when they come to visit. They're like, oh, I thought this was Southern and conservative. And I realize it's something different--

RISA GOLUBOFF: Yes.

CORDEL FAULK: --than I had in mind.

RISA GOLUBOFF: Totally.

CORDEL FAULK: Right.

RISA GOLUBOFF: Yes. So the second thing I'll say is when you do this process, you go through the central database. But you also send a packet to the schools you're most interested in. And I did not initially send a packet to UVA not because I wasn't interested, but because when I was applying there were Mike Klarman, Ted White, Barry Cushman, Chuck McCurdy. There were all these legal historians. They all did mid-20th century constitutional public law, civil rights, history. I thought, they're not going to hire me. What do they need another legal historian for?

And somebody said, no, you should really think about it. So I did send a packet. But I still thought, this is a long shot, because why would a school with such strength in legal history hire another legal historian? And there was one school, in fact, that I interviewed with who called me very late in the game and said, we weren't going to interview you, because we have a legal historian, but we heard you were really good, so we'll see you.

CORDEL FAULK: That's not warm.

RISA GOLUBOFF: It's not warm, number one. And number two, like, really? How many [INAUDIBLE] economists do you have?

CORDEL FAULK: That's exactly right.

RISA GOLUBOFF: Really? Only one legal historian per faculty? Whereas, you know, UVA had a real strength in both law and [INAUDIBLE].

CORDEL FAULK: We still do.

RISA GOLUBOFF: And we still do. And in fact, after I was hired, and before any of those people retired or left, we then hired Tomiko Brown-Nagin. So two more legal historians working in similar areas were added, which I think is a great thing. You build on your strengths. So anyway, I walked out of that interview. UVA was the only school where they were both warm, and nice, and kind, and lovely, and also rigorous, and hard charging, and pushing me on my scholarship, and constructive, and also coming at my scholarship from all different angles, all different methodological angles, all different political angles, right-- asking me questions that no one had ever asked me before, because they think about things differently.

And their backgrounds are different. And their politics are different. And I had been educated in largely homogeneous places, politically. And walking out of that room, I thought--

CORDEL FAULK: That we are not.

RISA GOLUBOFF: No, we are so heterogeneous. And you know what? I walked out of that room. And I knew in that moment that would make me a better scholar, right? To have to answer the questions that people all across the political spectrum, and think about my work from their perspective, was going to make me a better scholar. And now, as dean, I think it makes all of our students better lawyers. It makes our scholarship better as faculty. It makes our students more collegial, because they're reaching across these. And it's all three of those things put together, right, that I saw in that room.

CORDEL FAULK: In 30 minutes.

RISA GOLUBOFF: In 30 minutes, right? The collegiality, the warmth, the rigor, and the intellect, and the diversity of thought, and every other kind of diversity you want to talk about. I saw all three of those things. And they encapsulated this place. And I walked out of that room thinking, yeah, that's the place. Now, I didn't yet know if I had an offer [INAUDIBLE] like, or any of those other kinds of things. So there were still some kinks to figure out. I had to convince UVA that they wanted me. But I have such vivid memories of that, because I had a really strong reaction at the time. And then, of course, you remember things that carry through. And so from the second I got here, those things were true.

It was clear during the job market process, during the interview process, during the recruiting process. It all became truer and truer. And then when I arrived here as a faculty member, it was all completely true. And so it's been my experience ever since.

CORDEL FAULK: Excellent.

RISA GOLUBOFF: So I remember it very vividly.

[LAUGHS]

CORDEL FAULK: So during orientation, I was writing my orientation remarks. And I thought, oh, wow, if Dean Goluboff and I had been in this room 100 years ago, we would've been there to clean it up. And I asked you if you minded if I said it, and I did say it. And it really did strike a chord. So people have continued to ask me about that line all year. So I did want to talk to you a little bit.

You are the first female dean of UVA Law. Would you mind reflecting on that a little bit?

RISA GOLUBOFF: Yeah. No, I wouldn't mind. I'm happy to think about it. You know, one of the things that's interesting for my generation-- I'd be curious to see how my daughter experiences this. But going through my schooling, I was mostly in places where it was half women half men. And I always identified as a feminist. I was always in favor of women's equality. But it never occurred to me that there wasn't women's-- I mean, I knew there were things people were struggling for. But because of my educational experiences, I was really surprised when I entered the work world-- not just UVA, but everywhere-- there were places where you're the only woman in the room, the only woman on a panel, and all those kinds of things.

That really surprised me, and became something that I thought a lot about. And you know, as a teacher--

CORDEL FAULK: May I stop you for one second? So Ashley Merritt is here with us. So Ashley and I have been on the other side of that, like, all our lives. A lot of times, we were the only black people, the only black male, the only black female, in that room. So we know the opposite, the mirror end, of what you were experiencing.

ASHLEY Yeah.

MERRITT:

RISA GOLUBOFF: And it's uncomfortable. And it's hard. And you know, you're a representative, and potentially a token--

CORDEL FAULK: A lot of assumptions are made.

RISA GOLUBOFF: All sorts of assumptions. And we're trying to get to a place where that's not the case, right, where there's diversity all the time, everywhere, and people can be themselves, their whole selves. Not to say you get to [? racinate ?] it, but to say you're Cordel. You're your experience. And you're Ashley, you're your experience.

ASHLEY Exactly.

MERRITT:

RISA GOLUBOFF: And I'm so proud to be the dean of a law school where we have incredible diversity among our faculty and our staff, and our students, and continue to do that. So I've thought a lot about that.

CORDEL FAULK: You probably had to. People probably bring it up all the time.

RISA GOLUBOFF: Yeah. You do have to.

CORDEL FAULK: You probably get this question all the time.

RISA GOLUBOFF: Yeah. And I will say, I thought-- Let me say this first.

CORDEL FAULK: OK.

RISA GOLUBOFF: So one of the things I really enjoyed-- The *Libel Show* is something I really enjoy, though occasionally--

ASHLEY Can you explain what the *Libel Show* is?

MERRITT:

RISA GOLUBOFF: Occasionally not. The *Libel Show*--

CORDEL FAULK: I'm afraid they'll look it up.

RISA GOLUBOFF: So maybe we shouldn't talk about it. Forget it.

CORDEL FAULK: No, they're going to look it up.

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

ASHLEY Yeah, they're still on YouTube.

MERRITT:

CORDEL FAULK: Exactly. Right. It's all on there.

RISA GOLUBOFF: Somebody once pointed out that there were all these ways in which I was so different from what UVA deans had been in the past, right?

CORDEL FAULK: Right.

RISA GOLUBOFF: I'm a woman. And I'm really short, for those of you

[LAUGHTER]

Really, really short. My 12 and 15-year-old kids are taller than I am already. And I hope they

continue to grow. I'm a woman. I'm really short. I'm a northerner. I'm Jewish. All these kinds of things. And to me, actually, it's not that I'm different from UVA, because I actually think we contain multitudes. So I'm just one stripe of that. But certainly, being the first woman dean is something different for our institution. And Liz Magill had been the first woman vice-dean a few years before.

CORDEL FAULK: Our incoming provost.

RISA GOLUBOFF: Our incoming provost, who left for a few years to be dean of Stanford Law School, and is now coming back to be our provost, which is really exciting, and was on that hiring committee that hired me.

CORDEL FAULK: I wanted to ask about-- I had thoughts about who was in that room.

RISA GOLUBOFF: She was in that room.

CORDEL FAULK: OK. I can see that.

RISA GOLUBOFF: She was in that room. But I expected young women to be very excited that I was becoming dean in a kind of role model way.

CORDEL FAULK: Yes. That happened.

RISA GOLUBOFF: And that happened.

CORDEL FAULK: Yes.

RISA GOLUBOFF: And I expected older women who had been path breakers in the law to be really excited that I had become dean. And that happened.

CORDEL FAULK: Right.

RISA GOLUBOFF: What I was really unprepared for was everybody was really excited for me to become dean. And for a lot of people, questions of diversity and retention-- especially in law practice, retaining women and minorities is a challenge. And it created an opportunity-- not that our previous deans wouldn't have wanted to talk about those topics. I'm sure they would have been happy to talk about those topics. But suddenly, people felt like they could talk to me about that.

CORDEL FAULK: And not even just at the law school.

RISA GOLUBOFF: Everywhere. They wanted to say-- Law firm partners would come to me and say, I'm the chair of my retention and recruitment committee. And let me tell you the things we're doing. And let me tell you what's working and what's not working. And what do you think about this? Right? So they weren't thinking about diversity at the law school. They wanted to talk to me as a representative of the kind of profession that they want to see, and the kind of profession that they're trying to make true. And it was wonderful. And I didn't expect push back. I didn't get push back. But I didn't necessarily think that it would be meaningful to every demographic that I was now the dean.

And it turned out to be really meaningful in ways that did surprise me.

CORDEL FAULK: Well, drilling down a little further, you will be dean as we celebrate 100 years of women at the University of Virginia School of Law. How do you reflect on that? It's an interesting milestone. And it's an important milestone. And it wasn't something that we planned. You were the best person for the job. It just so happened that it coincides with 100 years of women at UVA Law. But how do you think about that, coinciding with that milestone?

RISA GOLUBOFF: Yeah. So I like that.

[LAUGHS]

I will say we have a bunch of milestones.

CORDEL FAULK: Right.

RISA GOLUBOFF: So that milestone is coming up. So the first woman law student joined the law school in 1920-- so next year will be the beginning of that period-- and graduated 1923. And we are also celebrating our bicentennial year as a law school and a university. So we were chartered in 1819. Law school classes started in 1826. And so we're thinking about our bicentennial, 200 years. Second oldest continuously operating law school.

CORDEL FAULK: In the country.

RISA GOLUBOFF: And why do we say that continuously-- why do we say that long, long phrase, Cordell? Do you know?

CORDEL FAULK: I did know the story. But I don't know the story well enough to say it publicly.

RISA GOLUBOFF: So I did know the story, too, right? So maybe we shouldn't do this. You guys--

[LAUGHS]

I think it's that-- I think it's William and Mary Harvard preceded us.

CORDEL FAULK: Right.

RISA GOLUBOFF: But I think William and Mary stopped maybe during the Civil War. I think there was a moment where they discontinued. So that's why we get second continuously operating. We could be third, if we were to give up the continuously operating.

CORDEL FAULK: No.

RISA GOLUBOFF: But we don't want that. Second's [INAUDIBLE].

CORDEL FAULK: You've done too much research into that.

RISA GOLUBOFF: So we are celebrating our bicentennial. And I'm obviously a trained historian, so I think historically anyway. But I was on-- as a dean, I served on some of the committees at the university level about the bicentennial. And one of the things that I thought of as my contribution to those conversations was to say, you know, when you think about your history, and you commemorate your history, first of all, you want to commemorate as well as celebrate. And second of all, we're not just about our founder, Thomas Jefferson. We're also about all the people who made us. And I think the university knew that.

But it was something I kept talking about. For example, President Sullivan had created the President's Commission on the History of Slavery at the university, which has led to a huge consortium of universities who study slavery. And the building, I believe, has just started on a new memorial to enslaved laborers, which I think is going to be incredible. And I'm really glad to see it. And now there's a new commission on the university and the age of segregation. So I think, obviously, I wasn't the first person to say we have to think about all of our history, not even the second, third, or tenth person to say that. But I did say it every time.

And I do think about it about the law school. And so the very first event, actually, that we held about the bicentennial was in honor of Gregory Swanson, who was the first African-American student at the law school, the first African-American student at the university, first African-American university student in a previously white university in all of the former Confederate

states. This was 1950. And--

ASHLEY I think the last one.

MERRITT:

RISA GOLUBOFF: Yes. All of the former Confederate states. So in the upper South, there were. But in the former Confederate states, he was the first. And so last year, we held a commemoration for him. We invited his family back. He has passed away. And we held an event with many speakers. We have a new portrait of him hanging in our library. He loved to read. That was the space that his family really wanted the portrait to hang in. And we have a Gregory Swanson award that we now award every year for a part of our Martin Luther King Day commemoration.

And so for me, what that does is it means that Gregory Swanson is a living presence in the law school, right? Every year, there will be students given awards in his honor. And his story will live on. And I think it really should. And I think the same is true for women, right? We should know how long-- half of our existence, at this point-- was without women, and what it took for women to come, and what their experiences were like. And you know, there are still women alumnae who I talked to who, you know, were here when there were very, very few women here. And it was really hard.

CORDEL FAULK: The first female professors, it was very difficult.

RISA GOLUBOFF: Very difficult.

CORDEL FAULK: Very difficult.

RISA GOLUBOFF: And so you know, I think we need to remember those stories. And we need to make them part of who we are. And I often, when I talk about Gregory Swanson, I say, Gregory Swanson began us along the path of becoming who we are today, right? He integrated this law school. And he single-handedly and in a very lonely way, for him, was the person who made us a diverse place in a tiny way that led to, over many years and with many more path breakers-- Elaine Jones, the first African-American woman-- many more pioneers and path breakers who made us the incredibly diverse law school that we are.

So 100 years of women. You know, I think it's good. I mean, obviously, I wasn't chosen for this reason. And I don't think--

CORDEL FAULK: No, you were not.

RISA GOLUBOFF: But I do think it's good to have a woman at the helm. And hopefully I will still be at the helm. You know, I have a five-year contract that you have to get renewed. So, President Ryan, if you're listening, hopefully I will be renewed. But I mean, assuming that I am-- [INAUDIBLE]

CORDEL FAULK: Otherwise, he'll have people picketing his house.

[LAUGHTER]

RISA GOLUBOFF: I think it'd be great. And you know, right now, the vice dean is Leslie Kendrick, who is also a woman.

CORDEL FAULK: And a Road Scholar.

RISA GOLUBOFF: And a Road Scholar, and a rock star, and a Supreme Court clerk.

CORDEL FAULK: She is everything. Yes.

RISA GOLUBOFF: But you know, we had a faculty candidate come through a little while back, and said to one of our faculty members who she knew, she said, it just feels like, you know, you've got these young, cool, rock star women at the helm. And that makes it exciting. And I hope other people feel that.

CORDEL FAULK: Our faculty is filled with young, creative, rock star women who are just going to destroy things [INAUDIBLE] because they're so good. They are that good.

RISA GOLUBOFF: All of our faculty is that good.

[LAUGHTER]

But it's true. We've got a lot of--

CORDEL FAULK: We really do.

RISA GOLUBOFF: It's great. And so I look forward to them coming of age, you know, and becoming more and more prominent.

CORDEL FAULK: So we're watching it now. If you look at the website, every day there's something on the front of the website that--

RISA GOLUBOFF: That they're doing. Yeah, it's great.

CORDEL FAULK: It's amazing.

RISA GOLUBOFF: So, I think when you think about 100 years of women, you want to look back and you want to think, what did it take to get here? And then you want to look forward, and say, you know, what are the barriers still? And you know, I think we still have to think about pedagogy. I think we still have to-- Obviously, you know, there are issues in the world that we are not immune from in terms of gender equality, racial equality, LGBTQ equality. I mean, you know, there are lots of issues in the world.

But we-- and part of my goals for my deanship is to make sure that every person at the law school-- student, faculty, staff-- feels they can bring their whole self to this place, and that their whole self is accepted, and that they are an equal citizen. And everyone feels a sense of ownership and belonging. And I think we do that. And yet you can't ever rest on your laurels. You have to keep doing that, and keep doing that. And I think there are still challenges in the profession, right?

Women are not partners in the same numbers as men. People of color are not, right? All those kinds of statistics that we read. Although I read one just this morning that women are now 35% of law school deans.

CORDEL FAULK: Is that right? Oh, very good.

RISA GOLUBOFF: And half of top 10 law school deans are women.

CORDEL FAULK: A member of them from UVA Law.

RISA GOLUBOFF: Women of color Are 10%. And I don't think the article that I read had an overall people of color percentage. It might have been 19%, but I'm not positive. But certainly, a real movement in the last number of years of terms of diversity in leadership at the law school level. And I think we still have to work on that, and still have to work on making sure that every opportunity is open to everyone, and then thinking about why the pipelines to leadership in the profession look the way they do, and how we can continue to help move them forward.

CORDEL FAULK: Well, let's talk on a more global scale. You are the captain of our ship. Where would you like to be piloting the law school as we head into our third century.

RISA GOLUBOFF: What a question.

CORDEL FAULK: We get that all the time.

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

CORDEL FAULK: I have one more question after this one.

RISA GOLUBOFF: So I would say, you know, I have several different kinds of goals.

CORDEL FAULK: Right.

RISA GOLUBOFF: We are starting a capital campaign, which is a big moment of fundraising for the third century and beyond of a law school. My top priorities for that are our students and our faculty. So we have this beautiful building that Bob Scott conceived, and John Jeffries completed-- Bob Scott conceived and built, and John Jeffries completed. And we don't have building projects. We are a people first place. And my goals are people first. So I am wanting to raise money for scholarships and loan forgiveness. That's my biggest single bucket of money that I want to raise.

CORDEL FAULK: We saw that beginning with [? Carstair. ?]

RISA GOLUBOFF: The [? Carstairs, ?] exactly. And the scholarships on the front end, and then loan forgiveness on the back end, where if you go work in public service, if you work under served community in Virginia, we will pay back your loans. I think people don't always know what we mean when we say loan forgiveness. We will pay back your loans for you while you're working in those jobs.

CORDEL FAULK: There's an exit ramp.

RISA GOLUBOFF: I want to make sure that people who want to come to this law school, and who we think will thrive and succeed at this law school, can come, that they have access to the school, and that they have access to the profession, and that they are not hamstrung by financial resources. So for some people, that's scholarships at the front end. And for other people, that's financial aid at the back end. And for other people, that's remunerative jobs that are our rock star career services offices will help them find. Career services, public service, judicial clerkships, right? We do that really well.

CORDEL FAULK: We do all three.

RISA GOLUBOFF: We do all three. And I think, you know, we're in the business of making hopes and dreams come true. And that's what we do. So access to the law school, access to the profession-- highest priority. My second priority for the capital campaign is to fund our faculty, right? What makes this law school special is the people. And we have phenomenal teachers who are out there changing the law, and changing the world through their scholarship, through cases they take, through serving on national committees. I mean, all of the things that our faculty do--

CORDEL FAULK: We have a podcast about that.

[LAUGHS]

RISA GOLUBOFF: And that will be starting right around the time this podcast starts. So listen to that. So funding our faculty is the second. I would say beyond those two, which are the bread and butter of any law school-- the staff, the faculty. And so I want to make sure that we are bringing in the best, the brightest, the most diverse in order to continue to thrive and succeed in the third century. I would say my additional goals are to expand our clinical and experiential offerings, which are amazing. They are amazing. But I think they can still be expanded. And there's been, in the last 10 years or so, an increased push for law schools to provide greater clinical education and experiential classes.

CORDEL FAULK: And our students are asking for it, too.

RISA GOLUBOFF: And so I think we do an amazing job there. I think we can do yet more. And then I would say the last piece is one we've already touched on. I would say the last piece is that I want to make sure our culture continues to be one where every student thrives, as well as succeeds. That's who we are. And that's who you are. And that's how you interact with the world. And that's why you bring up such fabulous students. That's why people come here. We are rigorous, and warm, and diverse. And that's who we are. Both and, both and, both and.

CORDEL FAULK: Right. That's what we want to be. And that's who we are.

RISA GOLUBOFF: And I want to make sure that we continue to be that, and we make sure that we're being that for everyone in our community, and that everyone feels equally welcome to join our community, and then feels an equal sense of belonging and ownership once they're here at every level.

CORDEL FAULK: Well, let me ask you one more question. So we talked to a lot of admitted students. And a few

weeks ago, you got, I think, the best question that I've ever heard from an admitted student. And I've been doing this for 10 years, now. So I'm going to paraphrase this question. Let's take for-- I hate the word collegial. I really don't like it. But I'll use it in this context. I'll take for granted that UVA Law is collegial. Everything that you say, I'll take it for granted. Let's say that it's all true and--

RISA GOLUBOFF: Stipulate it.

CORDEL FAULK: Yes. We'll stipulate it. We'll stipulate that UVA Law is collegial--

RISA GOLUBOFF: A little legal drop-in for you.

CORDEL FAULK: It's collegial, and it's different, and I can't get that anywhere else. Why will that help me moving forward in my career? I just thought that was the best question.

RISA GOLUBOFF: It's a great question.

CORDEL FAULK: So I'll let you answer it for everybody, now.

RISA GOLUBOFF: OK. So let me say, first off, that it's great because you get to be happy for three years, right? So the first thing, that's the baseline, right? So this is-- I like collegial. I also like to use community-minded, unity. I often talk about, we're a place of joy in humanity.

CORDEL FAULK: Right.

RISA GOLUBOFF: So the first thing is-- and I don't know that this generation gets this reference, but you'll tell me.

CORDEL FAULK: We'll explain it.

RISA GOLUBOFF: I often think that sometimes, because we talk so much about our community and collegiality, people forget about the rigor.

CORDEL FAULK: Correct, which they shouldn't. It's a mistake on their part.

RISA GOLUBOFF: The analogy I always think of is *When Harry Met Sally*. So Harry is trying to set Sally up on a blind date with a friend of his. And he says that she's attractive, and she has a good personality. And the friend says, which one is it? And Harry says, both. And the friend says, no, you know, either she's attractive when you say she's attractive, or she's not attractive, in which case you say she has a good personality. And Harry says, no, she can be attractive with a good personality, attractive without.

And I think when we talk about our community or collegiality, people assume a lack of rigor, lack of intellectual stimulation, lack of career opportunities, whatever is on the other side. And that's not true. It's both and, right? And what's so wonderful about this place is we have unbelievable teachers who are unbelievable scholars, who will be unbelievably rigorous. And we have phenomenal career services. We will place you in whatever kind of job you want, public, private, here, New York, DC, far flung, right? Wherever it is, we have all of that. We do that incredibly well.

And you get to enjoy your time here. So let's just put that in the stipulation. So then the question is, does it help beyond that? Is all it does is let you be happy? And the answer is no. It is far beyond that. So it does a few things. The first thing that it does is it gives you real skills, and real-- not just skills, but marketable and desirable skills for whatever part of the profession or beyond that you go into.

CORDEL FAULK: This is a profession about relationships.

RISA GOLUBOFF: Yes. It is. Exactly right. It's a profession about relationships. And the people in this law school are good at relationships, because they value them. And we value them. We don't take that for granted. We do all kinds of things to help our students flourish, and to interact with each other.

CORDEL FAULK: In and out of the classroom.

RISA GOLUBOFF: And so when you are here, you are having conversations with people with very different backgrounds. This the third piece of it, right? Very different backgrounds, very different viewpoints, and you are learning how to do that. That's the essence of the profession. The profession is all about dialogue across difference. You get to the courtroom, you have different views. You're pressing your case. But you're probably going to see that lawyer again. So you want to press that case in a way that is going to be OK for your relationship.

And I think that we really give our students unbelievable opportunities to be collaborative, and to be-- I mean, our students are really ambitious. They're really high achieving. And they want to do their best, but not at the expense of somebody else. And you don't have to do your best at the expense of somebody else. And in fact, you're going to be more successful if you do your best in collaboration with somebody--

CORDEL FAULK: That is our great lesson.

RISA GOLUBOFF: Not at somebody else's expense. So I think there are the skills that our students take away with them, that are interpersonal skills. And I think you see in high proportions that our graduates go on to become managing partners, general counsels, CEOs, heads of government agencies, heads of nonprofits. You see that because, how do you become a leader? It's by having good relationships, right? It's by navigating that. So I don't think it's a coincidence that our alumni are leaders in so many different realms, because they have those skills.

You know, some people talk about that as high IQ, high EQ.

CORDEL FAULK: Lou talked about that, yeah, yeah, Lou did.

RISA GOLUBOFF: OK, so that's a Louism.

CORDEL FAULK: I stole it from him, too.

RISA GOLUBOFF: I don't say it myself, but I take it from him.

CORDEL FAULK: I say it constantly. But I quote Lou though.

RISA GOLUBOFF: So that's what he means by that. I would say, though, that there are additional benefits beyond that. And the biggest one is the kinds of relationships that our students have with their faculty. And in part, that's because of our values, and our being one intellectual community of faculty, students, and staff, and in part-- and I think a lot of our community mindedness comes from being in a college town, right? So this institution is the central institution in the lives of its people.

That's not to say we don't have students who have families who live farther afield, and they are doing stuff with their families, or they have other interests, you know? It's not that everybody has the same relationship to the institution. But people have a really substantial relationship to the institution, and our faculty in particular. I don't think it's too far to say the law school is the central institution in our lives. We are not running around. We're certainly engaged in the profession. We're engaged in other committees, and various kinds of things. But this is where we are.

Our faculty are in the building. Their doors are open. They want to mentor students. They want to be teaching.

CORDEL FAULK: You had a class in your house.

RISA GOLUBOFF: I have a class in my house almost every year. Many of the faculty do. And so I think that the collegiality and community value really is shared not only by students, but by faculty. And that means they're better teachers. And it means they do more mentoring. And it means that you get number one, a better education because of the richness of our intellectual community. And it means, number two, instrumentally, strategically, our faculty are poised to know you so much better, and therefore be so much more effective as advocates for you, right? So we write clerkship letters that are so much more in depth.

CORDEL FAULK: Yes.

RISA GOLUBOFF: And we make phone calls. Our faculty are willing to make phone calls on behalf of students because they know the students so well.

CORDEL FAULK: Rachel Harmon chased a judge down the hall once.

RISA GOLUBOFF: I totally believe that.

CORDEL FAULK: She absolutely did.

RISA GOLUBOFF: And she's fast. She does triathlons. So I bet she got a judge.

CORDEL FAULK: Yeah. She got the judge. And the student got the clerkship.

RISA GOLUBOFF: So that's going the extra mile.

CORDEL FAULK: Chased him down the hall.

RISA GOLUBOFF: Yeah. So I think, like, our community mindedness-- because it's not only the students alone, it's the students and the faculty-- yield real tangible employment and career benefits, not just immediately but throughout your life. So I talked to a gentleman a little bit ago. He's about my age, so he's been out of law school 20, 25 years. And he said to me, I'm thinking about making a really significant career change. And so I called my small section professor, George Cohen. First call he makes 25 years after high school, his small section professor who is still his confidante and his mentor, which I just thought was incredible, and also totally true and exactly what we do. And then--

CORDEL FAULK: May I stop you for a second?

RISA GOLUBOFF: Yeah. [INAUDIBLE]

CORDEL FAULK: Dick Howard wrote one of my recommendations to law school. And to this day, I still go run things by him. I mean, that's not an uncommon experience for folks at UVA Law twenty years later to be calling up and say, hey, I want to run this by you.

RISA GOLUBOFF: Yeah.

CORDEL FAULK: I also do that with Leslie Kendrick.

RISA GOLUBOFF: We all do. I'm lucky, because that's her job, now. I want to run this by you. So the last thing I'll say is that because of the collegiality and the community here among our students, our students are really connected to this place when they graduate. Exhibit A, Cordel Faulk. Exhibit B, [INAUDIBLE] And here you are working for the place. And in fact, there are a lot of alumnus here at the law school. And it's because of this incredible dedication. And those who don't, share that dedication.

And so, when I think about, what does a network mean, right? What does it mean to be part of the UVA Law network? I think there are places where the network means you could, on a map, put little pins in the profession where you have people.

CORDEL FAULK: Right.

RISA GOLUBOFF: And that's cool. That's great, right? You could see where you might go. But that's different from a real living, breathing network where you look at that map, and you see that there are people there. And those people are really going to care that you, too, went to UVA Law School.

CORDEL FAULK: They're going to pick up the phone, and they're going to respond to that email.

RISA GOLUBOFF: Yes, because they went here. It was meaningful to them. They had a good experience. And they want to help you.

CORDEL FAULK: Right.

RISA GOLUBOFF: They want to hire UVA grads, because they know how good UVA grads are, because they know how special our graduates are. And so it's a network not just on paper, but a real, true network of people that you are-- 20,000 people who are living law grads, right? Growing every year that you are connected to. And I see that all the time when I meet with alumni. I see that

network in action. And that, too, is a real, tangible benefit of our collegiality. I think, I mean, for me you could stop right there to say, you could be happy for three years, and get a phenomenal education, amazing law degree, and go out and have a fabulous career.

But you don't have to, because I think that our community actually enables so much of that learning, and so much of that career. I think it really does make a huge difference in what your education looks like, and what your career opportunities will be.

CORDEL FAULK: So I want to tell everybody, I sprung that question on her. She didn't know that it was coming. That answer was still that good.

[LAUGHTER]

RISA GOLUBOFF: You're kind, Cordel. But I did have a practice, because that student had asked that.

CORDEL FAULK: That was a great question.

RISA GOLUBOFF: Well, so here's the thing about an academic community, right? You're always learning.

CORDEL FAULK: Yes. From our students.

RISA GOLUBOFF: We learn so much. And I learn from my students every day.

CORDEL FAULK: They're just so magnificent. We're very lucky.

RISA GOLUBOFF: That's true.

CORDEL FAULK: Well, thank you very much for joining us today.

RISA GOLUBOFF: Thank you.

CORDEL FAULK: And now we're going to look forward to listening to your podcast.

RISA GOLUBOFF: Excellent. I look forward to listening to yours. You can look forward to listening to mine. Thanks so much for doing this. It was really fun.

CORDEL FAULK: All right. Thank you.

[MUSIC PLAYING]