Guilford's Integration, 1962 Before and After: An Oral History
Suggested Questions for 1960s and early 1970s era African American Students and
format for the oral history interview

[Within questions, follow-up questions or clarifications are in brackets]

I’m [name] and I am interviewing [name], class of [year], on [date: month, day and year] in
[place: Friends Historical Collection, if on-campus, or specific off-campus location].

Thank you, ___________, for speaking with me today. Please state your name and ethnicity.

We’re going to talk a lot about your experiences at Guilford, but I would like to start by asking
you about your early years.

When and where were you born and where did you grow up?

Tell me about your family - your parents and siblings.

Tell me about the community where you grew up. Was it a racially integrated community?

What was the environment like there? Was there racial tension while you were growing up?
[Did you or your family encounter prejudice? In what ways?]

Tell me about people and organizations that provided a sense of community when you were
young. [Church, ministers, leaders, schools, teachers, etc.]

Did you experience businesses and other community services that were not open to people of
color?

Were your parents active politically? What were their feelings about segregation, integration, and
demonstrations, picketing and sit-ins?

I would like to ask about your early education. Tell me about the schools you went to as a young
person.

What was the environment like in those schools? Were they integrated?

Were your teachers welcoming and encouraging?

What was your experience in high school? Were there mentors in your high school who
encouraged you to do well?
You were motivated to continue your education. Did your high school teachers and counselors encourage you to apply to colleges, or did your motivation come from within, or from your parents and family?

How did you come to choose Guilford College for your college career? Did Guilford’s history as a Quaker institution influence your decision to come to Guilford and stay at Guilford?

Were there other colleges in the area, or elsewhere, that you considered? If so, what factors influenced your consideration?

[Did you consider NC A&T, and other HBCUs, such as Johnson C. Smith University in Charlotte? WSSU was renamed in 1969, having been Winston-Salem Teacher’s College since 1925 and existing earlier as Slater Industrial and State Normal School since its charter year of 1897. WSSU merged with the UNC system in 1972.]

Did you receive scholarships or loans? Did they play a role in your decision to come to Guilford, or in ruling out other colleges?

How did you feel about coming to a college where there were few African American students and faculty members?

Did you feel you were a pioneer of sorts, breaking new ground?

Were your parents concerned about your safety or well-being?

Which colleges did your high school friends choose to attend?

Tell me about arriving on Guilford’s campus. What were your impressions and what was it like?

Did you live in a dorm, or were you a day student?

If you lived in a dorm, in which dorms did you live, and what were your experiences there?

Were school administrators supportive? Did you feel any special effort was made to make the experience of coming to Guilford a welcoming and pleasant experience for African American students?

How were your classes? Were faculty members welcoming and supportive?

What was your major? Do particular faculty members stand out as playing major roles in your college experience?
Were students welcoming?

How would you characterize the attitudes on campus concerning race?

Were there African American employees on campus who were friendly or served as mentors to black students? [Do you recall their names and can you tell us something about them?]

Describe your experiences in the cafeteria.

In what ways did you become involved in campus life? Were there clubs that you joined? Did African American and international students feel included in campus social life - dances, parties, etc.?

Were you or your friends involved in sports?

Were there groups on campus concerned with racial injustice?

Can you talk about protests, demonstrations and pickets that took place in Greensboro in the years you were at Guilford? Did you know students who participated in those demonstrations?

[If so, can you tell us something about them? What kind of attitudes toward these events did Guilford students have?]

Did you ever feel treated unpleasantly because of race in the college community or in the Greensboro community?

Over the years, did you feel a continuing connection with the college? Have you kept in touch with the college, or with college friends?

How would you sum up your experience as a student at Guilford?

What career path did you take after graduation?

Has your Guilford experience continued to have meaning to you throughout your life, and in what ways?

Is there anything else you would like to share about your experience at Guilford?

Thank you.

I’m [name] and I am interviewing [name] on [month, day and year] in [location].

[end of interview]  Liz Cook, Archives Associate  2/14/2012, 6/28/12