

Ward Williams/Daily Nebraskan

Evelyn Speights carves a radish into a flower. Speights makes flower-shaped garnishes from vegetables to decorate the Harvest Room

# Cook peels veggies into roses

Harvest Room employee says there is beauty in vegetables too

By Amy Edwards  
Senior Reporter

People hurrying to get their lunch at the Harvest Room in the Nebraska Union may want to take time to smell the roses.

Or the radishes, as the case may be. Every day for the last 20 years, Evelyn Speights, a cook in the Harvest Room, has made "vegetable sculptures" to garnish the cafeteria lines.

Speights, 65, said she makes the flowers from any vegetables that are available, and can do it in about 10 minutes.

Speights said she also makes garnishes for the Mt. Zion Baptist Church, 12th and F streets, where she is the assistant director of the church choir.

Growing up in the South in a family of 20 children, Speights said, her parents taught her to make use of whatever she had to work with.

"I always tried to see the beauty in everything that comes along," Speights said, "even vegetables."

Her family had a large vegetable garden, and Speights said she and her brothers and sisters played house and used the vegetables for "dinner."

Speights said she got her love for cooking from her mother and her father, a chef.

Speights, who has four grown children, has lived in Lincoln for 28 years. At times, she has worked several part-

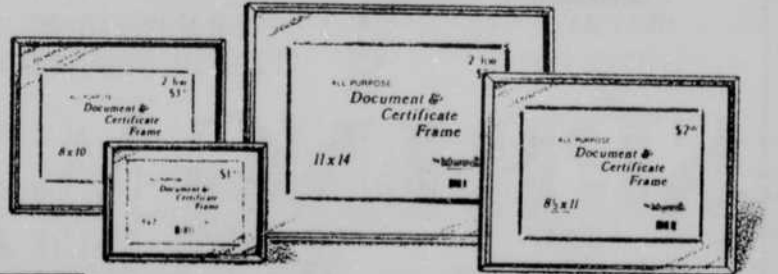
time jobs to support her family.

Speights said that as long as people can read, "they can do anything they want." Speights said she taught herself to read before she went to school by using one of her sister's books. She said she believes that

anyone can get an education and use it to make a living.

"If you want anything, work for it," Speights said. "If you go to jail you can work for the state, but you can never own the state. So work for yourself."

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