

# — Employees Prepare 5,000 Meals Daily

*This is the first in a series of articles on "silent services" at the Medical Center. This month we feature the dietetics department, 185 people without whom the Medical Center couldn't operate. In the months to come, we will print articles on messenger service, housekeeping, the telephone switchboard, and many other behind-the-scenes departments at Duke. If you have a suggestion for a silent service story for Intercom, please let us know at extension 4148 or drop a note to Box 3354.*

When the cooks in the hospital kitchen say they're going to fix macaroni and cheese for lunch, they really mean it.

The 100 quarts of macaroni and cheese they prepare for one meal would serve a family of five every night for nearly four months.

Yet just a portion of the patients and employes who eat at the hospital can and do finish off the maxi-recipe in one meal.

With a daily grocery bill that runs into thousands of dollars, dietetics is one of the largest backstage departments at the Medical Center. Nearly 185 employes cook and serve 5,000 meals each day, more than 1.8 million in a year.

Macaroni and cheese is just one of the hundreds of main dishes, soups, salads, vegetables, breads and desserts that food service workers at the Medical Center prepare. Their appetite-tempting results are served to patients in their rooms, in the patient cafeteria on the third floor, and in the personnel cafeteria.

Home base for the department is a large, ground-floor kitchen with Paul Bunyan-sized equipment. Soups are stirred in gigantic vats with metal utensils that resemble canoe paddles. The ovens bake dozens of pies and thousands of cookies each day. Salads are tossed in steel bowls the size of laundry tubs.

From the main kitchen, much of the food for patient meals is transferred to two "tray units" where food service workers dish out portions and arrange courses on trays for delivery to patients' bedsides.

In addition to providing well-balanced standard meals for many of Duke's patients and employes, dietetics prepares special diets for several hundred patients each day.

The department stocks salt-free cheese, butter and other items to give a more attractive menu selection to patients who must limit salt intake. Dietitians also have developed a number of especially appetizing dishes which fit into all-liquid, soft, or any of the other restricted diets.

"We try to serve patients the most appealing meals possible within their diet restrictions," Robert Jobin, food production manager, said.

"The requests we are called upon to fill often times include foods that we do not normally stock," Jobin said, "but the unusual is accomplished right away while the impossible takes a little longer."

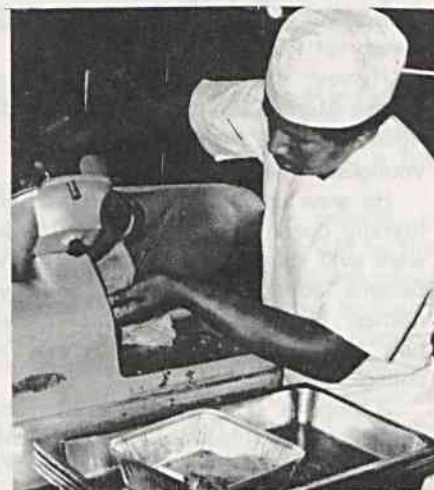
Medical center bakers add an extra touch when a patient has a birthday, creating a miniature decorated birthday

cake to be served along with his evening meal. On a normal day, the bakers will prepare two to three such treats to delight children and adults alike on hospital wards.

Dietetics is also in the catering business for other hospital departments. Requests for everything from coffee to full meals for several hundred guests are processed by the department every week.

Department personnel take their bows when a recently discharged patient writes a note of appreciation for the good food or when an employe asks for the recipe for a favorite cafeteria dish.

"Our employes like to know that the meals they prepare are enjoyed by our patients and employes," Jobin said.



**SLICING A ROAST**—Robert Hester prepares individual servings of roast beef for lunch at the hospital. (photo by Bill Boyarsky)



**IN THE DISH ROOM**—Mrs. Mary Winston pulls a serving tray from the large dishwashing machine in the dietetics department. (photo by Bill Boyarsky)



**STIRRING THE STEW**—Mrs. Iola Massey of the dietetics department stirs a giant pot of stew in the hospital's main kitchen on the ground floor. (photo by Bill Boyarsky)