

Who's Who In The Kitchen

Soon To Retire, Rosa Walker Shares Bounty Of Her Garden, Kitchen

By Audrey C. Lodato
Post Staff Writer

When Rosa Walker sets her mind on something, there's no stopping her. Earlier this year, she was named "Employee of the Year" by the City of Charlotte for her all-around performance. The Central Services employee plans to retire in June after nearly 15 years with the City.



Rosa Walker
...City worker

Then, watch out world! Raised on a farm in Georgia, Ms. Walker remarks with a smile, "You can get me off the farm, but you can't get the farmer out of me." Each year she plants a big garden and still handles the tiller herself. She always shares the bounty of her garden with others who are needy.

Retirement plans include fixing up her house and helping senior citizens who can't get around. "I would like to help somebody who can't help themselves," she reflects.

to do," she says. "I love to cook new things. Most of the time they turn out good."

She always bakes rolls for the Easter sunrise service at her church, Torrence Grove AME Zion, and usually makes rolls, cakes, and pies whenever there's a church dinner.

Even as she nears retirement, Ms. Walker does some things just as her mother taught her, such as rolling her biscuit dough until it gets slick. "I do my rolls that way, too," she adds.

She was the oldest of four girls in her family, and remembers, "Every time my mother left the house, I'd go in the kitchen and make a mess."

Ms. Walker likes to change and adapt recipes, such as adding coconut to her pecan pie. When baking cakes she's careful to measure, but for other recipes often just uses her own judgment.

What's the favorite recipe of this petite, soon-to-be-retiree? Pound-cake. Her daughter Joyce loves her coconut cake, while her grandchildren adore her cheese pie.

Roosevelt Walker, her deceased husband of many years, liked baked hens and chicken with dumplings.

How times have changed. She recalls that she met her husband when he and his brother stopped to give her a ride to the busstop. Seeing as she didn't know either one, she

says, "I wouldn't dare do that now!" Ms. Walker is on the deaconess board of her church and is missionary president.

She has four grown children: Catherine Gaither, Cleveland

Walker, Roosevelt Jr., and Joyce Ann Walker. Her two grandchildren are Yolanda and Corey Gaither.

Following are a few of Rosa Walker's prime putting-on-the-pounds recipes.

WATERGATE CAKE

- 1 pkg. white cake mix
- 3 eggs
- 1 pkg. pistachio pudding
- 1 c. salad oil
- 1 c. club soda
- 1/2 c. chopped nuts

Combine all ingredients except nuts and beat with electric mixer about 4 minutes. Stir in nuts. Pour into greased and floured tube or bundt pan. Bake in preheated 350 oven for 45 minutes or til done. Frost when cooled.

Pistachio Frosting

- 1 (9 oz.) container frozen whipped topping thawed
- 1/2 c. milk
- 1 pkg. pistachio pudding
- Pecan halves

Combine first three ingredients and frost cake. Garnish with pecan halves.

"SOCK IT TO ME" CAKE

- 1 box white or yellow cake mix
- 3/4 c. oil
- 1/2 c. sugar
- 4 eggs
- 1 c. sour cream
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- 1 c. chopped nuts
- 1 tsp. cinnamon
- 2 Tbsp. brown sugar

Mix first 7 ingredients well. Pour half into tube or bundt pan. Sprinkle with cinnamon and brown sugar. Pour in remaining batter. Bake at 325 for 1 hour. Cool. Mix glaze ingredients and pour over cooled cake.

Glaze

- 1 c. confectioners sugar
- 1 tsp. cinnamon
- 3 Tbsp. milk

BISCUITS

- 3 1/3 c. flour
- 2 Tbsp. sugar
- 4 tsp. baking powder
- 1 1/2 tsp. salt
- 3/4 c. shortening
- 1 egg
- 1 c. milk

Combine dry ingredients. Cut in shortening, until mixture resembles fine crumbs. Beat egg and milk lightly and add to flour mixture. Stir til mixture becomes a soft dough. Turn onto lightly floured surface. Knead til slick. Roll 1" thick. Cut into biscuits, place about 1" apart on ungreased cookie sheet, and bake in preheated 450 oven 10-12 minutes, til golden brown.

COCONUT CAKE

- 1 c. butter
- 2 c. sugar
- 4 eggs
- 3 c. flour
- 3 tsp. baking powder
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1/2 c. buttermilk
- 1/2 c. water
- 1 tsp. vanilla

Cream butter and sugar, add eggs one at a time and beating well after each addition. Sift dry ingredients together. Combine buttermilk and water. To creamed mixture, alternately add flour mixture and buttermilk mixture. Add vanilla and blend well. Bake in three greased paper lined pans for 20 minutes at 375. Remove from oven and let stand in pans a few minutes. Turn out on rack and cool slightly.

Filling

- 1 large coconut
- 2 c. sugar
- 2 Tbsp. cornstarch
- Milk

Grate coconut, reserving milk and 1/4 c. grated coconut. Mix remaining coconut with sugar, cornstarch, and coconut milk (add enough regular milk to coconut milk to make 1 cup). Cook over medium heat til thickened, stirring constantly. Cool slightly. Spread layers) sprinkle some of reserved coconut on layers. Assemble and spread over sides. Sprinkle with remaining coconut.

PECAN PIE

- 3 eggs
- 1 c. corn syrup
- 1 c. sugar
- 2 Tbsp. margarine, melted
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- 1 1/2 c. pecans
- Coconut (optional)
- 9" unbaked pie shell

Stir together eggs, syrup, sugar, margarine, and vanilla. Stir in pecans and coconut. Pour into unbaked pie shell and bake at 350 for 50-55 minutes, or until a knife inserted comes out clean.

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Coconut Cake and Cheese Pie are just a part of Rosa Walker's culinary repertoire. If you're counting calories, don't even look at these! (Photo by Audrey Lodato)

PARTY SANDWICHES

(This recipe was given to Rosa Walker by her good friend, Ruth Ball.)

- 3 hard cooked eggs, crumbled
- 1 pkg. (8 oz.) cream cheese, softened
- 3/4 c. chopped pecans
- 1/2 c. chopped green pepper
- 1/2 c. chopped onions
- 3 Tbsp. chopped pimiento
- 3 Tbsp. catsup
- 3/4 tsp. salt
- Dash pepper

Mix all ingredients together and let set overnight. Spread mixture on bread slices and cut into various shapes. Wrap in aluminum foil and set for several hours. Makes enough spread for 1 1/2 loaves of bread.

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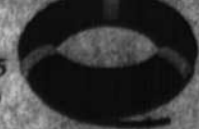
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