



Crafts Of Every Variety Fill This Warren Home

Phyllis King Stays Busy

By KAY HORNER
News Editor

"Things may come to those who wait, but only those things left by those who hustle."

That little epigram, done in graceful calligraphy, hangs in Warren County crafts-woman Phyllis King's kitchen. And from a look at the surroundings, it is evident someone has taken the message to heart. The room is filled with crafts of almost every variety.

It is difficult to say exactly what Phyllis does because what she does this week may not be what she does next week, and any attempt to pigeonhole her artistic pursuits seems doomed to failure.

It suffices to say she has more than dabbled in painting, ceramics, china eggs, photography, calligraphy, monogramming and embroidery, to name a few.

A Warrenton native and a graduate of John Graham High School, Phyllis, 40, is the daughter of Mrs. L. A. Hicks and the late Mr. Hicks. For a number of years she tried her hand in the business world, but never settled comfortably into the nine-to-five routine. All the while, she did her crafts as a hobby, producing items primarily for friends and local residents.

Several years ago, she began entering her work in craft shows.

"I had done all these things as hobbies all those years, then all of a sudden people started buying it," Phyllis recalled recently in an interview at her home. "Then I had requests from shopowners who wanted to buy from me wholesale."

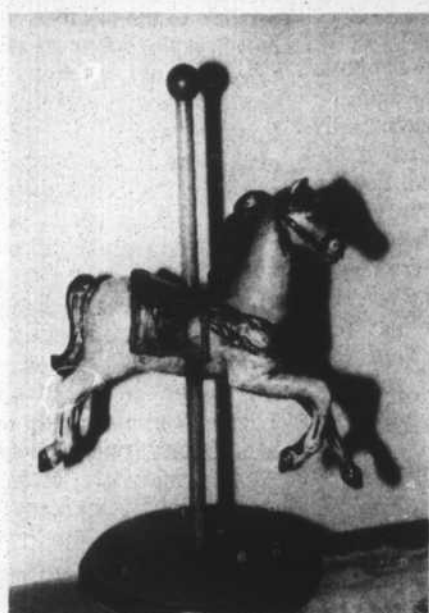
In 1981, she licensed her business under the name "The Country Shoppe" and began a cottage industry that doubled between 1982 and 1983 and has doubled again since last Christmas.

Today, her items, which include miniature, painted carousel horses and children's cup and bowl sets, are being marketed in 13 shops, six in surrounding counties, and her shipments often make their way to metropolitan markets such as Richmond, Va. and Atlanta, Ga., as well as Williamsburg, Va., Charlotte and New Bern.

Country decor is currently in vogue and has provided Phyllis an opportunity to focus on one of her favorite crafts, folk art.

One of her most popular items is the half-circle "Welcome Friends" sign with pastoral scenes of farm houses and barnyard animals.

Her ceramic dinnerware, which is molded rather than wheel-



Three of Phyllis King's favorite craft items are shown above. The pastoral scene on the "Welcome Friends" sign, the carousel horse (lower left) and the decorative tole painting on wood (lower right) have become popular items with the recent trend in country decor. (Photos courtesy of Phyllis King)

Warrenton craftswoman Phyllis King puts the finishing touches on one of her more popular items, a folk art "Welcome Friends" sign. The sign is one of 55 craft items currently being marketed by Phyllis in 13 shops in North Carolina and several out-of-state metropolitan areas. (Staff Photo)

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thrown like pottery, is also popular. Some is decorated with the colonial sign of welcome, the pineapple, and other dinnerware is decorated with a heart, for those whose taste may be more contemporary.

Every now and then she produces an item for her own pleasure, not knowing whether it will sell. One such item was a small, ceramic heart with a lid, designed for safekeeping of small treasures.

"I really didn't think it would sell," Phyllis said, "but it went like hotcakes."

Phyllis devotes between four and five hours a day, seven days

a week to her art, and attests that she does her best work between 10 p. m. and 2 a. m.

Her nocturnal schedule is made possible, in part, by her understanding husband of 22 years, Phyllis noted.

An assistant superintendent at the N. C. Department of Correction Prison Unit at Bunn, Earl King is often found in Phyllis' pottery studio pouring molds and trimming greenware, ceramic in its unfired form.

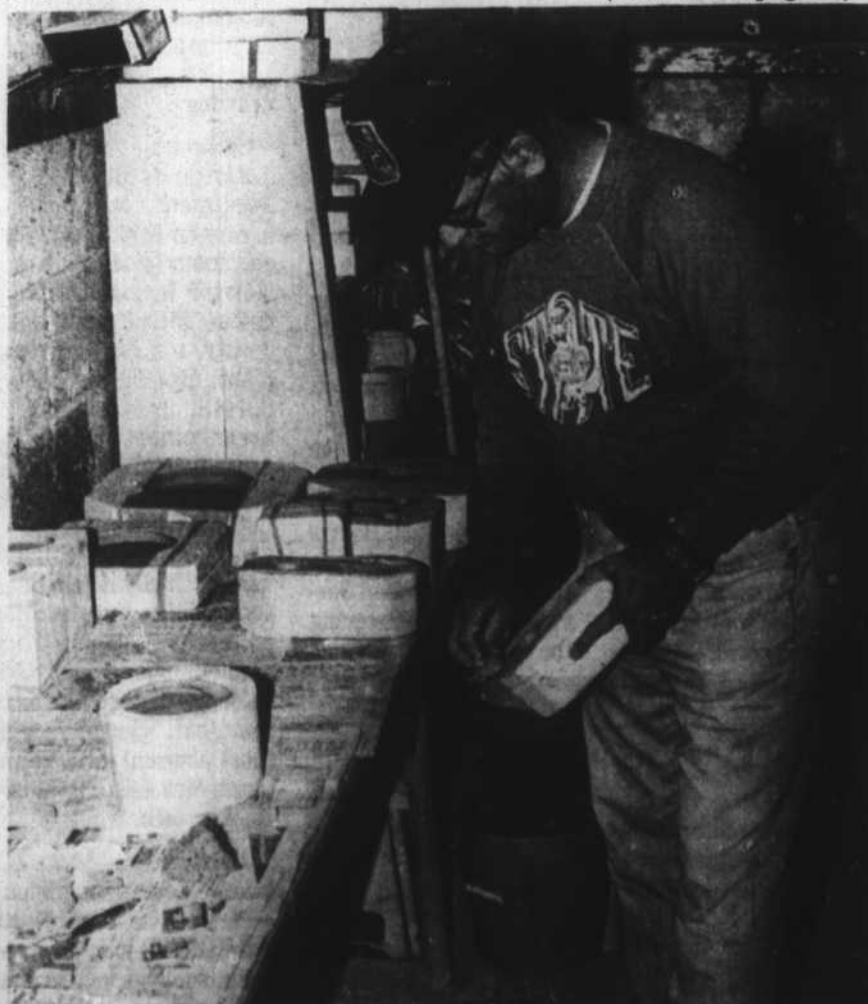
Phyllis produces her ceramics and other crafts from a studio in her home off S.R. 1107 (Warrenton - Ridgeway Road) and in her work

room, or pouring studio, adjacent to her mother's house down the lane.

Both homes are part of the family's 60-acre farm, "Dogwood Acres."

Because of Earl's hobby, restoration of golf carts, Phyllis commutes the short distance between house and work room in a golf cart Earl equipped with lights to accommodate his wife's late-night enterprise.

Phyllis' studio used to be a guest room before it was taken over by drawing board, paints and shelf upon shelf of craft supplies. Her sewing room, a remnant of the days when she made her own clothes and did (Continued on page 2B)



Earl King works officially as assistant superintendent at the N. C. Department of Correction Prison Unit at Bunn and unofficially as his wife's right-hand man in her pottery studio. Earl is shown above in the studio where he is often found pouring molds and trimming greenware. (Staff Photo)

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