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## The Knothole, February 1, 1971

SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry Student Body

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# THE KNOTHOLE

NEW YORK STATE COLLEGE OF FORESTRY  
FEBRUARY 1, 1971  
VOLUME 21 ; NUMBER 16

## MRS. EUSTACE NIFKIN RETIRES

-a good-bye sketch of Mrs. Beatrice Spear

Few of us probably realize how many services Mrs. Spear performed for us in her years at the College. It is indeed true that she's a remarkable woman, and although we hope that she finds her retirement to be relaxing, the KNOTHOLE would like to acknowledge the fact that the entire College is saddened by her absence. As such, the KH Staff has dispensed with the usual array of articles for this week, and for you Mrs. Spear, in grateful appreciation we dedicate this issue!

After twenty years of service to the College of Forestry, Mrs. Beatrice Spear retired to private life on January 20th. Receptionist, clerk, and friend to all, Mrs. Spear was for eight of those twenty years the lifeblood of the Office of Student Services. Under her efficient management, 107 Bray Hall became the source of salvation for many a confused Freshman seeking answers. The room and her name came to mean a motherly smile and a friendly "Hello, what can I do for you?".

Administrative personnel, together with her grateful students, seem untiring in their praise of Mrs. Spear's efforts and successes. The Empire Forester of 1969 was dedicated to her. On January 13th of this year, the Nifkin Hour was held in her honor. And, on the 19th, Mrs. Spear's last day of work at the College, a surprise retirement luncheon took place for her at Drumlins. In these ways, the College of Forestry community has sought to reward the lady many have come to call "College Queen" and "Mrs. Eustace Nifkin." Yet in spite of these and other tributes, those that she knew and served will probably never stop feeling that Mrs. Spear deserved more, that what was said and done as a "thank you" was not enough.

Mrs. Spear came to the College in 1951 as a clerk for the Student Services Department. She had a degree in dietetics from Cornell and had taught home economics, but at that time was in need of something more than a teacher's salary to help her children through school. The position with the Department provided this. Under the employment of then-Dean of Students, Raymond Crossman, Registrar Lawrence Belanger, and Receptionist, Florence Carruthers, Mrs. Spear worked for eleven years. In that time, the staff came to know her as a woman whose congeniality and efficiency helped her perform her duties in an outstanding manner. Miss Marilyn Wright, now secretary to President Palmer, recalled Mrs. Spear's admirable qualities of patience and helpfulness during those early years. When Miss Wright was hired by the Department, it was Mrs. Spear who taught her all about office procedure, and kindly corrected her mistakes.

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The attributes Mrs. Spear was displaying did not go unnoticed for very long. When Mrs. Carruthers, then in the process of building a lasting reputation of her own, became ill periodically, it was Mrs. Spear who was chosen to substitute as receptionist. It was a demanding task for many reasons, but chiefly because Mrs. Spear was expected to be the equal of Mrs. Carruthers, who was known for her amazing ability to recall names and faces even after a span of many years. Mrs. Spear disappointed no one. In fact, her stints as stand-in receptionist so proved her competence that when Mrs. Carruthers retired in 1962, she became the permanent Student Services receptionist. At once her love for students and her willingness to serve them distinguished her in the eyes of her superiors. The Student Services office expanded quickly during the early sixties, so Mrs. Spear soon had even greater responsibilities. The post of receptionist came to demand a combination clerk-secretary-public relations man. Mrs. Spear showed herself to embody the skills of each.

The traits upon which Mrs. Spear's near legendary reputation is based are at once hard to organize, for they are so all-encompassing. The quality of motherliness, that ability to consider each student's problem as if it was the problem of her own child, is most often cited when one asks about Mrs. Spear. Dean of Students, Harrison Payne said that Mrs. Spear often interceded for a student if she felt that he deserved special aid. Dean Payne was also quick to admit that it was Mrs. Spear who occasionally saw it necessary to remind him that the Office of Student Services is for the students first, and for administrative matters second. Miss Wright pointed out the spirit of kindness Mrs. Spear emanated in her student relations tasks. Mrs. Freeman, a College secretary also, praised Mrs. Spear for having "met all obstacles with a smile."

For the College's Freshmen, Mrs. Spear's guidance became valued as much as the words of the professional counsellors and advisors. To react as would a mother to certain students, Mrs. Spear sometimes had to be firm rather than merciful. But her gentle scolding of some students was always in the spirit of motherly advice.

While still involved in her usual office tasks, Mrs. Spear ran an employment agency of sorts on the side. Her great capacity for concern is evidenced by this service, for it supplied many a Forestry student, especially married ones, with part-time jobs during the school year. In view of the volume of work she is confronted with, the running of the employment agency seems an unusual accomplishment.

When absence reports were still diligently handled by Student Services, Mrs. Spear was charged with these, too. It became her often delicate task to weed out the fakers from the truly sick, and in so doing, she became known for her fairness and her accurate estimations of personal character.

The lengths to which Mrs. Spear would go to complete an assignment indicates her devotion to her difficult job. If Dean Payne needed to see a student, it was Mrs. Spear who would contact that student, no matter where he lived. Dean Payne jokingly remarked that Mrs. Spear

The Freshman Class is sponsoring a free flick entitled "In the Heat of the Nights" it will be shown Sat., Feb. 6, 1971 at 7:00 PM & 9:00 P.M. in 5 Illick. The movie stars Sidney Poitier & Rod Steiger, & was made in 1967.

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would do everything short of going right to a student's door to track him down.

Efficiency is essential in any office, and the ability of Mrs. Spear to coordinate her activities and get things done properly was no more definitely proven than in 1967 when, waylaid by a toothache, she couldn't report for work on the first day of registration for the Fall semester. Things never were so confused in 107 Bray as they were that day. Dean Crossman, along with Dr. Payne, volunteered to take over her job for the day, yet even the two of them together did not restore the state of complete organization that never seemed to be absent in the Student Services office when Mrs. Spear was presiding. The two substitute receptionists were threatened with the indignity of wearing aprons by the rest of the female staff since they were doing women's work, but in the hassle never actually received them. As further proof of her conscientious office practice, Mrs. Spear's record of file-keeping is spotless: not one filed record was lost during the years she kept them.

The decision to say good-bye permanently to the College of Forestry was one to which Mrs. Spear gave a lot of thought. It was, no doubt, a difficult choice to make. But Mrs. Spear's decision to retire, to leave the work which had so long delighted her, was made, characteristically, with the thought of helping others in mind. Mrs. Spear will continue to actively participate in Cornell alumni affairs, will help with adult church groups, and is looking forward to visiting her married son and daughters (who both married Forestry men) and their children. For her own part, she is especially eager to experience the feeling of sleeping late on snowy workday mornings. Syracuse will continue to be her permanent residence.

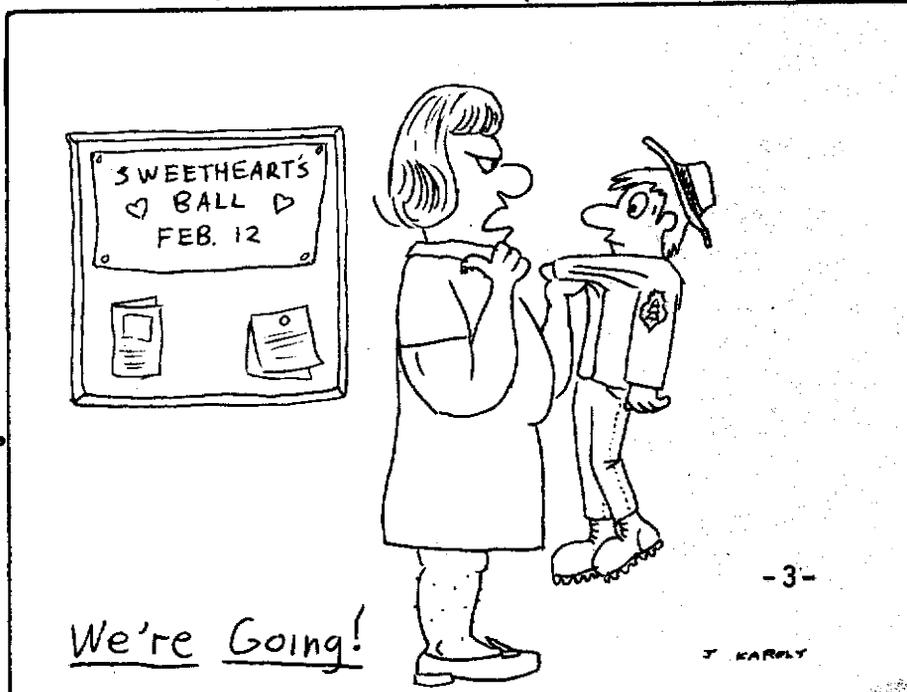
When asked, about a week before her retirement, to summarize her impressions of the typical Forestry student, Mrs. Spear explained that, in spite of the criticism they have often received, she has always liked the brand of student that studies here. "There are very few I've had reason to dislike," she said. "Most of them are fine, wholesome people."

Asked if she felt that student attitudes and mannerisms had changed over the years she served as receptionist, she replied that they really haven't. The basic attitudes are the same, she said, and politeness remains. There has been a broadening of horizons, though. Students have thrown off studious isolation, and now tend to be more attuned to and active in the world outside the college, Mrs. Spear summarized. She feels this is fine.

Finally, Mrs. Spear was asked what she will miss most upon leaving the College of Forestry. True to the image of the motherly lady, she answered, "The students."

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-Paul Hornak



# THE KNOTHOLE

PUBLISHED: Every Monday

ARTICLES : Students and faculty who have ideas about our College, notices they wish to announce, suggestions, stories, poems or anything that they might think our readers would find interesting are encouraged to submit these to the KNOTHOLE for publication. Please sign name to articles, and date them as well.

DEADLINE : Articles should be put in the KNOTHOLE mailbox in the basement of Marshall Hall no later than ten days before publication.

Anyone interested in joining the KH Staff is encouraged to get in touch with any of our members either in person or else via student mail. We also welcome any comments and/or criticisms. These should be placed in the KNOTHOLE mailbox.

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SPECIAL ASSISTANCE:

ART WORK: Montana Brown  
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FACULTY ADVISOR:

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## JOBS EUROPE PROGRAM

Panorama City, California, Jobs Europe program officials announced that they have guaranteed jobs available in Europe anytime of the year for hundreds of young Americans 18 to 26 years of age- Summer and year-round.

The aim of the program is to give young people an inexpensive and unique cultural opportunity to live in, and learn about, Europe.

This is the 10th anniversary of the program. To-date five thousand and eighty-six students have worked in Europe with their help.

These salaried jobs are mostly for general help with large 1st class European hotels. Most jobs include board and room. Friends can work with, or near each other, if they apply together.

Vice President Dr. Van der Velde from Holland stated that "England and the French and German speaking areas of Switzerland offer the best working, cultural, recreational and leisure opportunities."

An important feature of the program, besides the guaranteed job, is the fact that participants are free to travel where, and for as long as, they wish after completing their work assignment.

For free details: send a stamped self-addressed (business size) envelope to: JOBS EUROPE, 13355 Cantara Street, Panorama City, California 91402.

Best of luck in the new Semester, everyone.

PLEASE RECYCLE THIS KH WHEN YOU'RE FINISHED READING IT. THANK YOU.