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Commercial Fame Spreads Local Woman's Ad Spot Still Running

By Chase Purdy
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J. Clayton Wine

Beverly Craven prepares a tomato sandwich with Duke's Mayonnaise. Craven made a Duke's commercial two months ago, and it's still airing nationally. Beverly Craven hesitated.

"I had mixed feelings at first," she said. "Do I want people laughing at me? But then I thought, 'what you see is what you get.' "

The 75-year-old Charleston County Council clerk said she received a phone call from Duke's Mayonnaise two months ago asking if she'd be interested in their running the commercial they had filmed with her. She accepted, and today curious television viewers still stop her in grocery stores.

Before she was chosen to be filmed in the commercial, Duke's Mayonnaise representatives asked to meet Craven at Jack's Cosmic Dogs in Mount Pleasant, then took her to Boone Hall Farms for 55 minutes of further interviewing.

In the commercial, which is still being broadcast nationally, Craven appears at Boone Hall Farms and talks about her grandmother and mother using Duke's Mayonnaise for their recipes, specifically for tomato sandwiches.

Her friend Archie Burkel claimed responsibility for the commercial. She's the Top Hat of the The Hat Ladies of Charleston, an organization that Craven belongs to as well, and Burkel recommended Craven for the advertisements.

"Beverly Craven epitomizes the Southern lady," Burkel said. "From the top of her hat to the tip of her toes she exudes charm and graciousness."

It wasn't the first time her friends surprised her. In 2007 she said she was nominated and named the S.C. Older Person of the Year. Her prize: a trip to Washington D.C. to meet the state's senators and representatives and mingle with 51 other older persons of the year (Puerto Rico also sent someone).

Craven said she met the oldest worker of the year while there, a 106-year-old man who still worked every day of the week.

"I told him I was going to come back when I was the oldest," she said.

A glance at Craven's schedule reveals a busy woman's day-to-day life. When she isn't serving as clerk, she goes to the movies with her friends, plays cards or Bunko every Wednesday night and spends each weekend with her grandchildren.

"I have a busy life, but it's fun."

Craven plans to introduce her granddaughter to The Hat Ladies of Charleston Saturday.