Experiences of the director of WOI Homemaker's Half-Hour are related by Julie Wendel

FIVE days weekly at nine in the morning homemakers all over Iowa and surrounding states pause in their work to switch radio dials to Iowa State's Radio Station WOI. The Homemaker's Half-Hour is on the air. The voice behind the microphone is Mrs. Eleanor S. Wilkins, better known as Martha Duncan. Mrs. Wilkins has successfully combined three careers as homemaker and mother, as store-room manager of the Foods and Nutrition Department and as director of the Homemaker's Half-Hour.

Known to her radio listeners as Martha Duncan, Mrs. Wilkins is now in her third year as director of the Homemaker's Half-Hour. Listeners familiar with the program know that its first five minutes cover the "Market-Basket," the following twenty minutes present speakers from the Home Economics Division of the college and members of the Extension Service and the last five minutes are devoted to a sketch by Martha herself. This closing portion of the program has endeared the real Martha Duncan to her listeners.

"Martha says to you" introduces these five minute chats. They range in subject matter from the American's Creed with background music to "dishwashing can be lots of fun." Listening mothers like Martha to tell what their sons and daughters at Iowa State are doing. "Don't expect letters from them during exam week," advises Martha, and "Mary is learning to bake a lemon pie this week."

Every day letters and cards crowd the mailbox. They come from women on farms, in urban districts and even from hospitals and homes for the aged. Reactions to programs are quick. Listeners either agree or disagree and their letters are emphatic. Much of the mail heaped on Martha Duncan's desk requests copies of material presented on the program. Many letters, however, are from busy women in appreciation of the program.

"The satisfying thing," says Mrs. Wilkins, "is the number of people who write. Knowing that listeners really gain something from the broadcasts is a most heart-

"Martha Says to You..."


Mrs. Eleanor Wilkins, known as Martha Duncan, broadcasts from the Home Economics Building April, 1942