

A new symbol of black pride

By Eric Meckley
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 Pennsylvania State U.

In 1969 James Brown had a number one hit single with "Say it Loud — I'm Black and I'm Proud."

Exultant, direct and powerful. Pennsylvania State U. senior Stephen Mitchell walked down South Allen Street and — without speaking a word — said the same thing. His message swung at the end of a rope around his neck — one large black medallion with the continent of Africa carved into its leather face.

"Wearing medallions or wearing Koffis (an African hat) is a way of expressing African pride and a way of living in the

present," Mitchell said. "My medallion lets people know I'm black and I'm proud."

Mitchell bought his medallion about one-and-a-half years ago in New York City, about the time when medallions and other Afrocentric clothing and jewelry began appearing more frequently in cities and on college campuses.

That the medallions are now seen more frequently than gold jewelry demonstrates a new awareness, Mitchell said. "We're finally listening to the teachings of Malcolm X, Jesse Jackson and Minister (Louis) Farrakhan."

The designs gracing the leather and wood medallions today range from images of Africa to figures of black cul-

tural advocates such as Marcus Garvey and Malcolm X. Color combinations vary, but each hue represents something to the medallion's owner.

Red signifies the blood shed during the African people's struggle, black symbolizes unity and consciousness among the people, green represents the nature of the African motherland, and yellow is a color present in many African countries' flags.

Black Caucus President Walter Mosley said the cultural awakening symbolized by the medallions has led to increased self-respect among blacks.

"The medallions serve as an indicator to a lot of people that there's more to life than just America. There's a motherland where we all came from," Mosley said.



MANDIE YOUNG, THE DAILY COLLEGIAN, PENNSYLVANIA STATE U.
 Medallions displaying African imagery have become a common sight on campuses.

Special Dorms

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The concept of special-interest housing was introduced at the university in the late '70s.

"We wanted to experiment with a dorm where students could speak a foreign language all the time," said Dick Romm, residence life director.

"Dunn Hall was called Deutsches House. An instructor from the German department ate lunch with the students once a week. The students also had some German language presentations," he said.

The halls have also enjoyed strong popularity among students. They are open to all students, although two halls, academic pursuit and cross-cultural, require essays from potential residents.

Schafer, the creative arts hall, is one of the more successful special-interest dorms on campus, according to Romm. "This dorm has the highest percentage of returning residents. They've done a great job painting murals in their lobby and stairways."

Laura Ennis, a returning Schafer resident and an art history major, said, "Living in a creative arts dorm gives us a chance to be creative in a family atmosphere."

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