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a Season of tradition

## Kwanzaa celebrates seven values of African-American culture

By Jennifer Schmitt  
Community Editor

The seven principles of unity, self-determination, collective work and responsibility, cooperative economics, purpose, creativity and faith are the core of Kwanzaa, an African-American holiday celebrated every year from Dec. 26 to Jan. 1.

The celebration is one week long and each day focuses on a different principle.

Each day a family member lights one of the seven candles that make up the *Kinara*.

"There are three red candles, three green candles and one black," said Cobi Smith, director of the ASUO Black Student Union. "The red candles symbolize blood, the green stand for earth, and the black is for people."

After lighting the candle, the family reflects and discusses one of the seven principles.

"Each day has a different principle," Smith said. "The goal is to promote the principles and to practice them throughout the year."

Gifts, usually homemade, are exchanged each day.

"You can't just go out and buy a gift that someone may want," Smith said. "It should be handmade and should have a special meaning between you and the person."

Kwanzaa was created in 1966 by Dr. Maulana Karenga, founder of the US organization. The holiday is based on the many "First Fruit" celebrations that have historically taken place in various parts of Africa.

The holiday has no religious affiliation but is instead a celebration of the values and culture of African-American history.

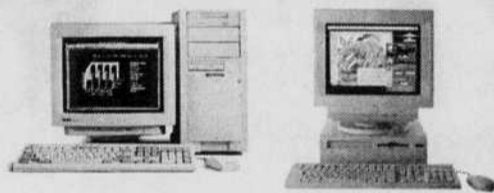
"This is a cultural holiday," Smith said. "Some people do just celebrate Kwanzaa, but some people celebrate Kwanzaa and another holiday like Christmas."

Kwanzaa was observed early by the BSU because of the University's conflicting winter schedule.

"We had our celebration last week," Smith said. "It should be celebrated in December but everyone is gone for the break so we did it early."



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less dough

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