

Kwanzaa Now Campaign

Most Frequently Asked Questions

	Question	Answer
1	What is Kwanzaa Now Campaign and its mission?	Kwanzaa Now Campaign is a people's campaign with a primary goal of encouraging the National Museum of African American History and Culture to include Kwanzaa appropriately in the museum, e.g. in their exhibits, gift shop and events. An appropriate exhibit should at a minimum include Kwanzaa symbols properly displayed with historical artifacts, pictures and an audiovisual teaching station.
2	What is Kwanzaa?	Kwanzaa is a Pan-African holiday celebrating family, community and culture; created in 1966 by Dr. Maulana Karenga, an African American. He drew inspiration from Africa harvest festivals and Black liberation movements in the 1960's. It is observed annually December 26 through January 1st. One of Kwanzaa's seven principles (Nguzo Saba) is celebrated each day; they are: Umoja (Unity), Kujichagulia (Self-Determination), Ujima (Collective Work and Responsibility), Ujamaa (Cooperative Economics), Nia (Purpose), Kuumba (Creativity) and Imani (Faith).
3	Why Kwanzaa deserves an exhibit in the museum?	Kwanzaa has and is making a significant contribution to Black life, history and culture. Kwanzaa is the only holiday African Americans have that was created by an African American, sustained and embraced across the spectrum of Black People. Today it is an international holiday celebrated by millions worldwide. The holiday Kwanzaa is a fact of history, and has been for over a half century, that cannot be intelligently denied. Visit Kwanzaanow.org for more detailed reasons.
4	How is Kwanzaa under represented in the museum?	We searched for Kwanzaa in the museum October 2018 and discovered the word "Kwanzaa" was mentioned only once in the museum history collection; the reference was not about the holiday practice, but about its founder. We later discovered no Kwanzaa events of any kind had been held by the museum. Recent visit (Nov. 2019) we found one children Kwanzaa book in the gift shop, a Kwanzaa pin in their digital database and a small pre-Kwanzaa children program was held December 7, 2019. Still, there is no Kwanzaa exhibit, no Kwanzaa events and no decorations during Kwanzaa.
5	Why not donate historical Kwanzaa artifacts that the museum may consider for a Kwanzaa exhibit?	We will donate historical Kwanzaa artifacts for an exhibit when the museum do two things: 1. Acknowledge Kwanzaa is not appropriate represented in the museum, and 2. Agree to establish an appropriate Kwanzaa exhibit within a reasonable deadline.
6	How can people support the campaign?	People can support in the way best suited for them or their organization, e.g. petitions, visit the museum individually or in groups requesting an exhibit, email (Mr. Spencer Crew, NMAAHC Director at crews@si.edu and copy the email to info@si.edu), phone calls to the museum, radio call in, or submit articles to newspapers. This is a People Campaign for Kwanzaa, therefore the people can express their support to NMAAHC in the most intelligent way they feel. For more details and tools to support go to: kwanzaanow.org

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7	What do you mean by a "People Campaign for Kwanzaa?"	Kwanzaa was made a holiday by the people embracing and establishing it through practice, likewise it is the people campaigning for Kwanzaa to receive its rightly earned place in the museum. People who are taxpayers and believe our museums should be historically correct and fair should speak up collectively on this issue.
8	How does "Kwanzaa Now Campaign" operate? Is it an organization?	Kwanzaa Now Campaign is not an organization. It is a People's Campaign for Kwanzaa, being aided and held together by a small national work group or task force. There are some local organizing committees forming around the country to aid and encourage local campaign organizing. We are also receiving support from other parts of the world, such as Canada, England and the Caribbean.
9	Why did NMAAHC choose not to include a Kwanzaa exhibit?	We are not sure and cannot speak for the museum. However, when we asked the museum curators to include a Kwanzaa exhibit they told us Kwanzaa is adequately represented in the museum without an exhibit, even though the word "Kwanzaa" is mention only once in the history collection. They also said they could not include everything in the exhibits. See Kwanzaanow.org for detailed images and detail report May 15, 2019 meeting with museum .
10	Does Kwanzaa replace Christmas?	No. There are people that practice Kwanzaa and Christmas. The two holidays are celebrated on different dates. Christmas is a religious holiday, Kwanzaa is not, it is a Pan-African cultural holiday.
11	How do you answer people that say: "Kwanzaa it is not a real African holiday; it was created by a man"?	It is true to say there was no holiday name 'Kwanzaa' in Africa before 1966 and no informed person would make that claim. Dr. Karenga drew from various African cultural practices to formulate Kwanzaa. All holidays are started by a person or persons, only after people accept and institute the practice does it become a real holiday.
12	Will you address questions regarding Dr. Karenga's personal history?	No. We are organizing for Kwanzaa only. Our mission is to get NMAAHC to give Kwanzaa it's appropriate place in Black history and culture within the museum. We will not allow our mission to be sidetracked by those who oppose Kwanzaa or just seeking to create chaos and division for dramatic entertainment. Kwanzaa is too significant in Black life, culture and history to allow it to be diminished by 50 year old disagreements, hatred, cointelpro or anything else. Kwanzaa is a historical reality the museum can't honorably dismiss for any reason.