

11-28-2000

## Kwanzaa Celebration Means New Cultural Tradition for University of Dayton Law Professor and Her Family

Follow this and additional works at: [https://ecommons.udayton.edu/news\\_rls](https://ecommons.udayton.edu/news_rls)

---

### Recommended Citation

"Kwanzaa Celebration Means New Cultural Tradition for University of Dayton Law Professor and Her Family" (2000). *News Releases*. 9233.

[https://ecommons.udayton.edu/news\\_rls/9233](https://ecommons.udayton.edu/news_rls/9233)

This News Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Marketing and Communications at eCommons. It has been accepted for inclusion in News Releases by an authorized administrator of eCommons. For more information, please contact [frice1@udayton.edu](mailto:frice1@udayton.edu), [mschlangen1@udayton.edu](mailto:mschlangen1@udayton.edu).



Nov. 28, 2000  
Contact: Pam Huber  
Huber@udayton.edu

---

## NEWS RELEASE

### **KWANZAA CELEBRATION MEANS NEW CULTURAL TRADITION FOR UNIVERSITY OF DAYTON LAW PROFESSOR AND HER FAMILY**

DAYTON, Ohio — Vernellia Randall feels deeply the lack of cultural history associated with being the descendant of African slaves. So she's become a thoughtful supporter of Kwanzaa, the nonreligious African-American holiday first celebrated in the mid-1960s.

Kwanzaa runs from Dec. 26 to Jan. 1 and is designed to celebrate, one per day, the seven principles of unity (umoya), self-determination (kujichagulia), collective responsibility (ujima), cooperative economics (ujamaa), purpose (nia), creativity (kuumba), and faith (imani).

Randall, a professor of law at the University of Dayton who specializes in health care law and its implications and limitations for minority populations, celebrated last year with a diverse circle of friends who each hosted a Kwanzaa night.

"We had a ceremony and then shared with one another the meaning of the day," Randall said. "We talked about what it meant in our lives and how we could use it during the rest of the year."

Initially she resisted the idea of celebrating a "made-up" holiday. "But I finally decided that we're made-up people, and this is a way of celebrating our positiveness. African-Americans have no connection to their history, no connection to their ties, even to their religion. Maybe it's like people with amnesia. They may have a life now and know their immediate history, but there's a blank spot in their mind they can't access. That's what it's like hitting that brick wall where our cultural history should be."

-over-

Randall hosted the celebration for ujima last year, the first year she celebrated Kwanzaa at her home. "That's my favorite," she said. "For as long as we remember and believe, any change that ever comes about is by collective work and responsibility."

Why has she decided to adopt this tradition now? "My sons are 23 and 29, so I'll have grandkids on the way sometime in the future. I've gotten started now and by the time they get to be 8 or 10 years old, we'll have this tradition that they'll always have known.

"The blank spot will just be for me."

-30-

For media interviews, contact **Vernellia Randall** at (937) 229-3378 or via e-mail at [randall@udayton.edu](mailto:randall@udayton.edu). For background, see her home page at <http://homepages.udayton.edu/~randall/>.