



# **Business in Black and White: American Presidents and Black Entrepreneurs in the Twentieth Century**

*Robert E. Weems*

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## **Business in Black and White: American Presidents and Black Entrepreneurs in the Twentieth Century**

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**Business in Black and White** provides a panoramic discussion of various initiatives that American presidents have supported to promote black business development in the United States. Many assume that U.S. government interest in promoting black entrepreneurship began with Richard Nixon's establishment of the Office of Minority Business Enterprise (OMBE) in 1969. Drawn from a variety of sources, Robert E. Weems, Jr.'s comprehensive work extends the chronology back to the Coolidge Administration with a compelling discussion of the Commerce Department's "Division of Negro Affairs."

Weems deftly illustrates how every administration since Coolidge has addressed the subject of black business development, from campaign promises to initiatives to downright roadblocks. Although the government's influence on black business dwindled during the Eisenhower Administration, Weems points out that the subject was reinvigorated during the Kennedy and Johnson Administrations and, in fact, during the early-to-mid 1960s, when "civil rights" included the right to own and operate commercial enterprises. After Nixon's resignation, support for black business development remained intact, though it met resistance and continues to do so even today. As a historical text with contemporary significance, **Business in Black and White** is an original contribution to the realms of African American history, the American presidency, and American business history.

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