



Remarks For

The Hon. Jovita Carranza
Deputy Administrator
U.S. Small Business Administration

Delivered At The

NATIONAL BLACK HISTORY MONTH PROGRAM

Wilbur J. Cohen Auditorium
Voice of America

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Good morning, I am pleased to be here today to welcome you to the Inter-Agency's 2008 National African American History Month Program.

Thank you, James [Vincent], for that nice introduction.

I am glad that all of you could join us to celebrate African American History Month. This is a time for all of us to recognize the many contributions and achievements that African Americans have made to our history, and to our nation.

This year's theme is "Carter G. Woodson and the Origins of Multiculturalism."

The story of Carter G. Woodson is one of the most inspiring and instructive stories in black history.

Carter G. Woodson was a noted author and historian, and known as the "Father of Black History." In February 1926, he launched Negro History Week as an initiative to bring national attention to the contributions of black people throughout American history. The week evolved into a full month in 1976.

The son of two former slaves, Dr. Woodson was born in a small town in Virginia, but his dedication to developing the study of African American history has expanded the way we look at our country's past.

Dr. Woodson believed that African Americans should know and understand their past in order to participate intelligently in the affairs in our country. He strongly believed that African American History was a firm foundation for young African Americans to build on in order to be engaged citizens.

He often said that he hoped the time would come when the Negro History Week that he founded would not be needed.

During his lifetime, Dr. Woodson developed an important philosophy of history. History, he insisted, was not the mere gathering of facts. The object of historical study is to arrive at a reasonable interpretation of facts. History is more than

political and military records of peoples and nations. It must include some description of the social conditions of the period being studied.

His philosophy has made the study of African American history a legitimate and acceptable area of intellectual inquiry. Dr. Woodson's concept has given a profound sense of dignity to all African Americans.

The achievements, strides and contributions that African Americans have made to the United States and our history are better known today than they were just a few decades ago. And this is due in large part to Dr. Woodson's efforts – and having programs like this one.

African American history is a story of a struggle for freedom and equality that spans centuries and has been led by many brave, visionary, and determined leaders from many different walks of life.

It is also the story of individual triumph and tragedy...and of moving accounts of courage and persistence in rising above prejudice.

I am sure that leaders like Colin Powell and Condoleezza Rice – the first and second black Americans to serve as Secretary of State – as well as Clarence Thomas, America's second African American Supreme Court Justice, would agree: America has made great strides in diversity in recent decades.

We are also seeing great strides in minority business ownership. In the last 25 years, the percentage of businesses owned by minorities has increased from 7 percent to greater than 18 percent in the Census Bureau's most recent Survey of Business Owners.

We at the Small Business Administration are committed to helping all Americans to start, build and grow their small business.

SBA's products and services are essential for enabling minority entrepreneurs. Compared to conventional small business loans, for instance, our guaranteed

small business loans are almost three times more likely to go to minority borrowers.

And in the last fiscal year, we approved close to 9,000 loans for more than \$900 million to African American borrowers through our two primary loan products.

In addition, during the 2007 Small Business Week, SBA honored several African American small business owners.

Today, for millions of Americans of all races and backgrounds, small business ownership is a part of their story. We're very proud of the work we do to help them succeed.

Let me say thank you for the opportunity to speak today, and, again, welcome everyone to today's Inter-Agency's 2008 National African American History Month.

Please enjoy the program.