

**Wielding the *Blade*: J. Anthony Josey, the *Wisconsin Enterprise-Blade* and
the Construction of a Contemporary Black Political Identity**

Max Fuller, University of Wisconsin-Madison

This paper shows the black press publication *Wisconsin Enterprise-Blade*, under the leadership of its publisher, J. Anthony Josey, constructed a political identity for its readers linking the group's trajectory to collective economic and labor gains in the years preceding the presidency of Franklin Roosevelt and the New Deal era. Through an analysis of *Wisconsin Enterprise-Blade* editions spanning from 1925-1932, I show Josey regularly highlighted economic and labor issues he considered paramount to the advancement of Milwaukee's black community. Further, I argue this reporting primed *Blade* readers to interpret the New Deal and the ideals of social liberalism it bore with it as the best possible way to achieve economic and workplace prosperity and embrace the identity Josey imagined for them.