

March 8, 2013

EDWARD M. SMITH
PRESIDENT & CEO

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington D.C. 20500

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Dear Mr. President,

I wish to add my voice to the growing movement to ask you to award, posthumously, the Presidential Medal of Freedom to Fred Ross Sr. the legendary organizer who recruited and trained extraordinary leaders like Cesar Chavez, Dolores Huerta, Justice Cruz Reynoso and countless other organizers to confront injustice.

In 1941, at a critical juncture in our history, President Franklin Roosevelt articulated the Four Freedoms that democratic society had to offer the world: The Freedom of Speech and Worship and the Freedom from Want and Fear. For more than fifty years, Fred was an artisan and teacher of the craft of organizing, and he showed that the courageous use of democratic principles could realize those high sounding words.

Fred helped ordinary people find their voice and organize their power to overcome labor abuses, environmental threats, and address racial, gender and economic discrimination. His expertise in one-on-one organizing, his technique of raising the House Meeting to the basic building block of community and issue organizing and his confidence in finding extraordinary leaders in the process is now recognized and practiced all over the world.

I therefore respectfully ask that you recognize Fred Ross Sr. with the Presidential Medal of Freedom because his work and his legacy help us all realize the greater potential of our democracy.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Edward M. Smith

cc: Valerie Jarrett