

March 7, 2013

Barack Obama  
The White House  
Washington, DC

Dear President Obama,

We are writing in support of the nomination of Fred Ross, Sr., to receive the Presidential Medal of Freedom. As leaders of the United Church of Christ, a denomination that has long supported justice for farm workers, we know of the decades-long struggles and triumphs of farm workers in their efforts to gain justice. Fred Ross played a key role in this struggle and in many others. He was a very talented and untiring organizer who trained both Cesar Chavez and Delores Huerta, the founders of the United Farm Workers Union. A former staff member of the United Church of Christ who worked closely with the farm worker movement tells the following anecdote about Fred's skills.

I walked into an organizing strategy meeting during the grape strike. The session was being led by Marshall Ganz who was outlining the strategy on a blackboard and sounding more and more like the professor he later became at Harvard. Marshall was going along at a pretty good clip when suddenly Fred Ross, sitting in the back of the room stood up and raised his arm revealing a torn shirt sleeve. "Marshall," he said, "that's a pretty good strategy you've outlined. There is only one problem with it. It won't work." The entire room, including Marshall, broke up in laughter. Fred as organizer was always in the background, never up in front, but always holding those who were in front accountable for what they did and said.

Ross devoted his life to working for justice, and his extraordinary organizing skills changed lives and made our world a more equitable place. It is past time for his remarkable work to be honored with a Presidential Medal of Freedom.

Thank you for considering Fred Ross' nomination for this award.

With prayers for justice and peace,



COLLEGIUM OF OFFICERS

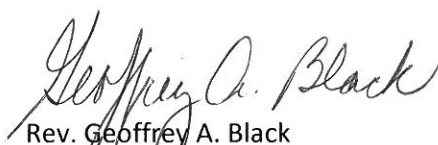
Geoffrey A. Black  
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Rev. M. Linda Jaramillo  
Executive Minister  
Justice & Witness Ministries

God is still speaking,

