

UNITEHERE!

WESTERN REGIONAL OFFICE
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President Obama

White House
Washington DC

February 15, 2013

Dear President Obama:

It is the rare person who deeply touches the lives of literally hundreds of thousands of people. Fred Ross, Sr is one such man. I write to urge that you award posthumously the Presidential Medal of Freedom to Fred Ross, Sr.

You have often spoken of your roots as a community organizer in Chicago. Fred Ross was one of the most outstanding organizers that this nation has ever produced. I will not recount here all of his good works and accomplishments but there are some which cannot go without mention.

Fred was every bit as responsible for the creation and success of the United Farm Workers Union in its heyday as were his “students” Cesar Chavez and Dolores Huerta. Fred mentored and trained not only Cesar and Dolores but thousands of the best organizers in our country and his legacy has continued well beyond his death.

I was proud to know Fred personally and to be able to say that he worked with me in my first campaign to become an elected officer of my union, UNITEHERE. UNITEHERE in many ways is one of the best examples of Fred’s legacy. Our union is blessed to have numerous organizers working at our union in key leadership positions who were trained at the feet of Fred Ross, Sr. I believe them to be among the best organizers in the labor movement.

While Fred’s skills as an organizer are legendary, it is what he did with those skills that I believe have earned him a Presidential Medal of Freedom. He began organizing in the 1930’s and 40’s with the migratory workers from the “Dust Bowl” in California. From there he moved to organizing Latinos and helped elect the first Hispanic ever elected to the Los Angeles City Council. He organized to fight against school segregation, discrimination and voter suppression. During World War II, Fred fought against the inhumane interment of our Japanese citizens, an incredibly brave stance during that time. Throughout his career, no matter what cause he worked on behalf of he made sure that he was training organizers to carry on that fight when he moved to the next one.

D. TAYLOR, PRESIDENT

GENERAL OFFICERS: Sherri Chiesa, Secretary-Treasurer • Peter Ward, Recording Secretary
Tho Thi Do, General Vice President for Immigration, Civil Rights and Diversity



Fred Ross, inspired, agitated and organized for the common man for his whole life and he did it all ferociously but quietly. The limelight was not for him. He cared only for the cause of justice. In this day when efforts to suppress voting rights are on the rise and working people slip further and further behind, it is a time to honor a man who spent his entire life fighting injustice and seeking to teach his fellow workers how to effectively stand up and fight for their rights, make their voices heard and create a better world for their children.

Mr. President, our country needs more dedicated young organizers to put our country back on track. To bestow the highest civilian award possible to one of the greatest American organizers I believe would do much to inspire our young people to take up the fight for justice and carry on the legacy of Fred Ross, Sr.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sherri Chiesa". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a prominent dot above the 'i' in "Chiesa".

Sherri Chiesa
Secretary-Treasurer
UNITEHERE