

Michael B. Hancock
Mayor



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August 18, 2014

The President
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President;

I encourage you to confer the Presidential Medal of Freedom upon Fred Ross Sr., an unsung hero of the civil rights movement and an influential community organizer who was a mentor to luminaries such as Cesar Chavez and Dolores Huerta. Ross helped change our society for the better, and the impact of his actions continues to be felt today.

Ross was a pioneer of the American organizing tradition and civic engagement in the democratic process. The courage of his convictions and his capacity to inspire people to work together drove him to train thousands of people in the art of organizing and to demand equal rights.

Whether advocating for a Dust Bowl emigrant seeking a new life, a farm worker seeking fair working conditions, or an African-American or Latino seeking an end to segregation and discrimination, Ross was there to take action, and he exemplifies the best of our national spirit.

From civil rights to human rights, he dedicated his life to fighting for the underdog, the marginalized and the oppressed, and for full participation in the democratic process. In California, Ross organized Latino parents to fight school segregation in support of Mendez vs. Westminster, which set the stage for Brown vs. the Board of Education eight years later. He was also a key player within the United Farm Workers movement and was instrumental in the passage of the historic California Agricultural Labor Relations Act.

In recognition of his life's work, Gov. Jerry Brown recently announced Fred Ross Sr.'s induction into the California Hall of Fame. But Ross' actions did more than impact California. His deeds had an impact on our nation, and he should be recognized appropriately.

I encourage you to consider this request to honor this American hero of democracy and equality with this well-deserved recognition.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. Hancock", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Michael B. Hancock
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