

February 10, 2013

Honorable President Barack Obama
c/o Julie Chavez Rodriguez
Associate Director of Latino Affairs and Immigration
Office of Public Engagement
The White House

Dear President Obama,

I am writing to strongly encourage you to confer the Presidential Medal of Freedom to Fred Ross, Sr.

I am one of literally thousands of people whose lives were indelibly changed for the better by Fred. Fred's ability to motivate people to take on large struggles through seemingly small actions was unparalleled. I met Fred as a 19 year old who was compelled to leave college and join the historic struggle for justice for migrant farm workers. Fred converted me from a shy but committed participant to a confident organizer who in turn mobilized hundreds of people over many years.

I worked with the United Farm Workers for seven years, and happily, in my next job as an organizer with the national grassroots organization Neighbor to Neighbor I had the opportunity to continue work with Fred who into his 80's showed no signs of waning commitment and few signs of slowing down. Today I am the Co-President and Co-CEO of Equal Exchange, a \$50 million employee-owned cooperative that has engaged the coffee and chocolate industries in building social justice through "fair trade" in the marketplace. Even in this position I count on lessons learned from Fred Ross, Sr. over many years.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Rob Everts