

From: **Dr. Clayborne Carson** <ccarson@stanford.edu>
Date: Wed, Feb 13, 2013 at 4:26 PM
Subject: Support Fred Ross, Sr., for Presidential Medal of Freedom
To: president@whitehouse.gov
Cc: julie_C_Rodriguez@who.eop.gov

Dear Mr. President,

I wish to support the campaign urging you to award posthumously the Presidential Medal of Freedom to the late organizer and social justice proponent Fred Ross, Sr.

As you may know, I have spent most of my professional life editing and publishing the papers of Martin Luther King, Jr., but my broader interest has been the historic effort, which King symbolized, to extend equal rights and opportunities to all people. In part because of my long association with many SNCC organizers, such as Ella Baker and Bob Moses, I have come to recognize that social justice movements not only rely on visionary, charismatic leaders such as King but also on dedicated grassroots organizers such as Fred Ross. Fred was held in esteem by other organizers, and he helped to train many of the organizers who mobilized the Mexican-American community during the 1950s and the farm workers movement of the 1960s.

Fred never gained national prominence, but I have long been aware of his admirable reputation as one of the long-distance runners who made vital contributions to twentieth-century movements to overcome various kinds of oppression. Although I had only a brief personal acquaintance with him, I have known a number of dedicated activists whose lives he has deeply affected. As with your previous Medal of Freedom award to Fred's longtime colleague Dolores Huerta, this new recognition will spur public interest in the many social justice struggles to which Fred contributed. By giving presidential recognition to Fred's achievements, you will draw needed attention to the role of talented organizers in building enduring mass movements.

Sincerely,

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