

February 27, 2013

President Barack Obama  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave., NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

You are an organizer. You are President of the United States because you applied organizing principles to your campaigns.

In one way, you are an unusual exception among organizers: you have become extremely well-known. Most organizers, including great ones, do not become famous.

Because you are an organizer, you are better prepared than any previous President to understand that lack of fame says nothing about the importance of an organizer's contribution to our nation.

For that reason, I join so many others in urging you to recognize Fred Ross Sr. by posthumously bestowing the Presidential Medal of Freedom upon him.

Last year you heard from Dolores Huerta, when you honored her with the Presidential Medal of Freedom, that Fred Ross Sr. mentored both her and Cesar Chavez. That extraordinary legacy would be enough by itself for him to merit your consideration.

Fred Ross Sr. had a rare—I venture to say unique—combination of attributes. His unquenchable passion, his ability to inspire, his skill at teaching and training, his profound understanding of organizing and its value: all these combined with an extraordinary longevity to make his contribution so outsized. Some of us do good work as organizers and then move on, and the best of us—including you—apply organizing principles to our work as we move on. Fred Ross Sr. never moved on. He devoted nearly a half century to educating, agitating, inspiring, and training people of all races and backgrounds to overcome fear, despair and cynicism.

His legacy, as Sister Huerta told you, is seen in her and in our late Brother Chavez. His legacy is likewise found in generations of organizers and in millions of lives those organizers touched. I never knew Fred Ross Sr., but I surely know of his legacy, because that legacy is everywhere apparent among those who struggle for justice.

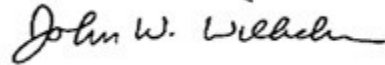
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D. TAYLOR, PRESIDENT

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

Because you are an organizer, you are the only President who understands why Fred Ross Sr. is so deserving of this honor. By honoring him, you honor all those organizers working so hard for justice, unsung heroes who will know that they share in his recognition.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "John W. Wilhelm". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

John W. Wilhelm  
Retired President