



Office of the Mayor

Tom Bates
Mayor

August 4, 2014

The President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

I write to encourage you to confer the Presidential Medal of Honor 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. He helped change our society for the better and the impact of his actions is still 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 you were 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 v. Westminster, which set the stage for Brown v. 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, Governor Jerry Brown recently announced Fred Ross, Sr.'s induction into the California Hall of Fame. But his actions did more than impact this state. His deeds impacted our nation and we believe 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.

Sincerely,

Mayor Tom Bates
City of Berkeley