

February 22, 2013

The Honorable Barack Obama  
President of the United States  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW  
Washington D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

I join my voice to others asking you to award, posthumously, the Presidential Medal of Freedom to Fred Ross Sr. He was my friend and mentor in the United Farm Worker's' Union and in many other campaigns and organizing projects.

Fred was an artisan and teacher of the craft of organizing. He started with one-on-one contact with individuals in the community, then engaged them in the house meeting and then went on to collective activity and the discovery and development of local leaders.

These are simple ideas, but, in his determined and courageous hands, real change always happened. He gave the dispossessed and the outsiders the skills and encouragement to stand-up for themselves. His work and his legacy of skilled organizers are still at the core of realizing our democratic potential as a country. We all have benefitted from the incremental victories over social or economic injustice.

Recognizing Fred Ross Sr. will remind us that so many of the changes that we have seen in the last sixty years, and that we take for granted because they are recorded in law or legislation, started as the aspirations and organizing efforts of ordinary people working together to make our country better. That is an accomplishment in itself and a message to future generations worthy of the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

/S/

Robert D. Purcell, Retired  
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