



Department of Investigation

Press Release

Release #076-2000

Manhattan Woman Pleads Guilty To Bank Fraud

-Admits Embezzling \$70K To \$120K In "Mulberry Street Mall" Funds From NYC-

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 2000

EDWARD J. KURIANSKY, Commissioner of the Department of Investigation (DOI), announced today that ANNE COMPOCCIA, the former president of the Little Italy Chamber of Commerce (LICC), has pleaded guilty to federal bank fraud involving the embezzlement of \$70,000 to \$120,000 in payments from local merchants to the City for charges and fees involving the Mulberry Street Mall in Little Italy.

According to Commissioner Kuriansky, COMPOCCIA was responsible for collecting payments from about 50 Mulberry Street restaurants, cafes, and gift shops for the operation, on summer weekends, of a pedestrian mall, and submitting them to the Mayor's Community Assistance Unit's Street Activity Permit Office.

COMPOCCIA was charged on November 9, 2000, in a Manhattan Federal Court criminal Information, with a scheme to defraud the Chase Manhattan Bank, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 1344.

COMPOCCIA was accused of forging endorsements, between April 1996 and October 1999, on dozens of checks made payable to the City Department of Finance (DOF) that she received from local merchants for payment of Mulberry Street Mall fees and costs, and illegally depositing the checks into a Chase bank account under her control in the name of the Little Italy Chamber of Commerce.

Pleading guilty today in federal court in Manhattan before U.S. District Judge John G. Koeltl, she admitted that she used the funds for personal expenses, including rent and phone bills, as well as for charitable and political contributions.

COMPOCCIA faces a statutory maximum penalty of 30 years in prison and a \$1 million fine. Under the applicable sentencing guidelines, COMPOCCIO likely faces a prison term of between 10 and 16 months and a fine of between \$3,000 and \$30,000. The judge advised COMPOCCIA that he may also order restitution, when she is sentenced on February 23, 2001.

Commissioner Kuriansky said, "This guilty plea sends a loud and clear signal that those who cheat the City of New York will be caught and prosecuted. Corruption in any form undermines the public's confidence in government. This former community leader and City employee not only disgraced herself, but betrayed the trust of her association's members, local merchants, and the residents of New York."

According to Commissioner Kuriansky, DOI began an investigation in April of alleged payment irregularities involving the Mulberry Street Mall.

The investigation disclosed that COMPOCCIA had unlawfully endorsed numerous checks from various Mulberry Street merchants, by writing "NYC Department of Finance" on them, and had fraudulently deposited the checks into a Chase bank account that she controlled for the LICC.

In May, COMPOCCIA resigned as LICC president. She also resigned as president of the Figli di San Gennaro, the committee that runs the annual Little Italy Feast of San Gennaro, and announced that she would not seek reelection as Community Board 1 chairperson.

COMPOCCIA, 52, of 80 North Moore Street in Manhattan, a City employee since February 1998, is currently a Human Resources Administration (HRA) stock workers' supervisor, earning a salary of \$48,552 a year.

She will be suspended without pay.

Commissioner Kuriansky expressed his sincere appreciation to Rudy Washington, Deputy Mayor for Business Services and Community Development, and members of his staff, as well as to the Chase Manhattan Bank, for their assistance in the investigation.

The investigation was conducted by Julia Davis, DOI's Inspector General for Executive Offices & Non-Mayoral Agencies, Detectives James Tampellini, Raymond Berke, and Thomas Barnes of DOI's Investigative Squad, and Supervising Auditors David Estimada and Maria Fe Pacres, and Investigative Auditor Pearl Tang, of DOI's Investigative Audit Unit.

The Office of Mary Jo White, United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, is prosecuting the case. Assistant United States Attorney William E. Craco is in charge of the prosecution.