



NEWS RELEASE

Comptroller of the Currency
Administrator of National Banks

NR 2001-72

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 16, 2001

Contact: Robert M. Garsson
(202) 874-5770

Gale Cincotta a “National Treasure,” Says Comptroller Hawke

WASHINGTON -- Comptroller of the Currency John D. Hawke, Jr. issued the following statement today regarding community activist Gale Cincotta, who passed away on August 15.

With Gale Cincotta’s passing we have lost a true national treasure. Gale was an American original, who developed the practice of community advocacy to a fine art. While some viewed her as a kind of urban terrorist, who could organize a boisterous demonstration in a campaign to highlight the plight of inner city neighborhoods, to others she was an inspirational leader, who knew how to get things done and pursued the interests of those she represented with all the vigor at her command. But however one felt about her, it is clear that no one in our time did more than Gale to raise our collective consciousness about the corrosive effects of redlining -- a practice she viewed as her call to action.

Last year, on a tour of neighborhoods on the West Side of Chicago, I sat on a bus with Gale for several hours and gained a new insight into what made her tick. Because of her illness she was not as mobile as she had been in her earlier days, but she was no less passionate. As the tour progressed she reminisced fondly and poignantly about what these neighborhoods had been like as she was growing up in the area -- and deplored what they had been permitted to become. Her vision of the potential for the rebirth of these areas was grounded in her personal knowledge and appreciation of what they had been, and that vision inspired generations of dedicated activists to commit themselves to the hard-slogging task of urban revitalization. She helped to set in motion a movement whose works are being reflected in urban communities throughout the country, and we all are in her debt.

###

The OCC charters, regulates and examines approximately 2,200 national banks and 56 federal branches of foreign banks in the U.S., accounting for more than 55 percent of the nation’s banking assets. Its mission is to ensure a safe and sound and competitive national banking system that supports the citizens, communities and economy of the United States.