



NEWS RELEASE

From New York State Inspector General
Catherine Leahy Scott

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STATE EMPLOYEE ARRESTED FOR ALLEGEDLY STEALING FROM TRUST ACCOUNTS OF CAYUGA NATION CHILDREN

New York State Inspector General Catherine Leahy Scott announced the Director of Native American Services at the New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) was arrested today on charges she was systematically stealing money over a seven year period from trust fund accounts held for Cayuga Nation minors which she oversaw as part of her official duties.

Kim Thomas-Muffoletto, 56, of Getzville has been employed as a Native American Affairs Specialist and the Director of Native American Services for OCFS in that agency's facilities in Buffalo. She was arrested today on the charge of Grand Larceny and arraigned in Buffalo City Court. OCFS had previously suspended Thomas-Muffoletto pending the outcome of this investigation.

"The defendant's alleged actions were an egregious and deplorable abuse of her authority," said Inspector General Scott. "She was entrusted with the safekeeping of funds belonging to children – and she violated that trust so she could pay her own personal expenses. This alleged misconduct was shameful and inexcusable."

Thomas-Muffoletto worked for Native American Services at OCFS since 1991. One of her duties was to administer trust fund accounts for select Cayuga Nation minors, which included moneys paid by the state to Nation members in accordance with treaty obligations. During the relevant period of this investigation, Thomas-Muffoletto was the only person with authority to deposit or withdraw money from these accounts.

The investigation found that between April 2007 and January 2014, Thomas-Muffoletto allegedly stole \$24,687 from 15 accounts. She used some of this money to pay personal expenses such as insurance and car payments. She also used the money to pay for expenses of family members, which included traffic fines.

Thomas-Muffoletto admitted to the Inspector General taking money from the trust accounts without the permission of OCFS or anyone else and using the money for her personal benefit and the benefit of others.

Thomas-Muffoletto was arraigned before the Hon. Betty Calvo-Torres of Buffalo City Court. She is scheduled to return to court November 14, 2014. Inspector General Scott thanked OCFS for its assistance in the investigation and Erie County District Attorney Frank A. Sedita, III and his staff for prosecuting this case.

The defendant is innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.

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