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**Edward F. Stancik**  
Special Commissioner

**NEWS RELEASE**

October 16, 2001

**BOE Employee Arrested for Theft of Disaster Relief Supplies From WTC Site**

Special Commissioner Edward F. Stancik announced the arrest today of a New York City Board of Education plumbing supervisor for stealing donated disaster relief supplies from the World Trade Center site. Frank Zanutti, 66, of Armonk, N.Y. has been charged with multiple misdemeanor offenses, including petit larceny and criminal possession of stolen property. The investigation began when an outraged witness anonymously informed Stancik's office of the theft by Zanutti. Stancik is also investigating an allegation that Zanutti's supervisors who learned of his theft did not report it to the police or Special Commissioner's Office because they feared bad publicity would ensue.

Zanutti, a 19-year BOE veteran who was paid over \$120,000 last year, was assigned to repair projects at schools affected by the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001. One of the schools to which he was assigned, P.S. 234 (Independence School), located on Greenwich Street, housed a Red Cross disaster relief station, which maintained food and supplies for victims and relief workers at the nearby World Trade Center site. During the week following the disaster, BOE employees observed Zanutti taking several trash bags containing relief supplies without authorization and reported the activity to their supervisors. Zanutti admitted this conduct when confronted by his supervisors, and at their direction he returned a quantity of the supplies to his office in the Bronx. Other BOE employees then brought the supplies back to the Red Cross station at P.S. 234. The supplies included hard hats and other protective gear for search and rescue personnel, tools, work boots, gloves, clothing, and other miscellaneous items. Zanutti, who with his wife owns several pedigree show dogs, also stole dog food and protective dog boots intended for the search dogs at the World Trade Center site.

After being confronted with evidence of his theft, Zanutti decided to retire from the BOE. In addition to Zanutti's arrest and prosecution, Stancik will recommend to Chancellor Harold Levy that the BOE bar him from future employment.

Stancik thanked Manhattan District Attorney Robert Morgenthau for his office's assistance in the investigation.

(more...)

Zanotti was previously convicted of crimes he committed while a public employee. In 1970, Zanotti, who was then a patrolman for the New York City Police Department, was arrested, tried and convicted of bribe receiving, official misconduct, and conspiracy. He served 90 days in jail following his conviction and was dismissed by the Police Department.

Stancik is continuing to investigate the actions of five BOE supervisors who failed to report Zanotti to the police or Special Commissioner's Office. Stancik has repeatedly recommended disciplining BOE employees who fail to report crimes to the proper authorities. He noted that delays in reporting crimes inevitably lead to the loss of valuable evidence, compromising the investigation and any subsequent prosecution.

While theft by BOE employees is never excusable, Stancik stressed that in light of heroic efforts made by search and rescue personnel and relief organizations, Zanotti's conduct is particularly deplorable. He further stated that his office will continue to aggressively investigate and root out any BOE employees who engage in such egregious behavior. Despite Zanotti's actions, Stancik is confident that the outstanding efforts by many BOE employees who responded to the schools affected by the disaster will not be tarnished.

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