When I first took office as Assistant Secretary of the Interior a little over five years ago, I became immediately and very heavily involved in the complicated but immensely fascinating subject of territorial administration. Each time that the problem seemed unfathomable I was assured that solutions would be found as soon as one of the key people in the system returned from maternity leave.

So frequently was this repeated and so unanimous was the opinion that in the short span of three or four months the name and reputation of Ruth Van Cleve assumed almost legendary proportions. In a few words, she was depicted as the personification of enthusiasm, industry, intelligence, scholarship and charm before whom all problems of territorial law melted away.
Upon her return to duty, Mrs. Van Cleve not only survived this formidable advance notice—she demonstrated it to be an accurate, if conservative, evaluation. We first gave recognition to her outstanding performance by divorcing her from the limitations of the legal function and making her responsible for the whole gamut of territorial responsibility. Tonight, well-merited recognition transcends the boundaries of departmental honor. I am extremely proud to present Mrs. Ruth Gill Van Cleve as a Federal Woman’s Award recipient for 1966 and to read the following citation of her accomplishments:
THE FEDERAL WOMAN'S AWARD
IS PRESENTED TO
Ruth G. Van Cleve

In recognition of her outstanding accomplishments as an attorney and administrator devoted to the problems and the welfare of United States territories.

Recognized throughout the Government as an authority on territorial law, she was one of the principal architects of legislation leading to statehood for Alaska and Hawaii. As a creative administrator, she has inspired the territories of Guam, the Virgin Islands, American Samoa, and the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands to new heights in development of housing, educational and health facilities, thereby enriching the lives of 200,000 people in these territories. She is the first woman to head a Bureau of the Department of the Interior.