

“New Jersey McGreevey Divorce Update”

By StraightDivorce Staff on 6/05/2008

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In following up on the McGreevey/Matos trial, which began on May 6th 2008, in Union County Courthouse in Elizabeth, New Jersey, one aspect of the divorce trial, the financial aspect, concluded on June 4th, 2008. The first three days of the trial were closed to the media as Judge Karen Cassidy considered custody issues involving the couple's 6-year-old daughter. The issues to be decided in the divorce settlement involve custody, alimony and child support, and whether Mr. McGreevey, now openly gay, committed fraud by marrying a woman. Everyone has been waiting to see whether the trial sets a new precedent in the divorce arena, as it explores the issue of fraud in both politics and marriage.

Final Arguments Delivered on June 4th 2008

Following three weeks of testimony, lawyers delivered their final arguments on Wednesday, June 4th, closing the money phase of the bitter divorce of Jim McGreevey and Dina Matos. After the couple shared what they claim is a dire financial situation, the decision regarding alimony and child support will now rest in the hands of the judge who makes her final decision in July 2008 at the earliest. The final phase of the divorce, which is a fraud claim by Ms. Matos, is to follow. The fraud claim will not be heard until after the money issues are settled and if it reaches trial, could include scandalous testimony from a former campaign aide, claiming to have had sexual encounters with both of the McGreeveys. Dina Matos claims she did not know that her husband was gay until right before he announced it to the world and she also claims she was duped into marrying a gay man who thought he needed a wife to support his political career. Mr. McGreevey says she knew all along that he was gay.

What Ms. Matos is Asking in Alimony and Child Support

Ms. Matos has asked the judge for \$2,500 each month in alimony for four years, \$1,750 a month support, and for her soon to be ex-husband Jim McGreevey to foot her legal bills for the divorce, which exceed \$250,000. Mr. McGreevey does not want to pay alimony, and is hoping to be assessed support payments of about \$100 a month based on state guidelines factoring in the incomes of both parents and their custody arrangements.

Challenges Between the Two Lawyers

According to testimony, both Ms. Matos and Mr. McGreevey are both heavily in debt, made even worse by exorbitant legal bills incurred from the divorce. Ms. Matos claims to owe about \$750,000. Mr. McGreevey claims to owe his boyfriend more than \$200,000. He is also \$11,000 behind in child support for his daughter from his first marriage. During closing statements, Ms. Matos' lawyer, John Post challenged Mr. McGreevey's claim that he is broke, stating the 50 year old seminary student is

intentionally under-earning to avoid paying alimony. Mr. Post called Mr. McGreevey's dire financial situation a "contrived farce." Mr. McGreevey's lawyer, Stephen Haller said his client doesn't owe Ms. Matos anything in alimony because the marriage lasted just four years.

Mr. McGreevey abruptly resigned in 2004, acknowledging in a nationally televised speech that he is "a gay American" who had an affair with a male staffer. The staffer denied the affair and said he was sexually harassed by the governor. One aspect of Ms. Matos alimony claim comes from the fact that she would have lived as New Jersey's first lady for 13 additional months had her husband not resigned in disgrace. Mr. McGreevey maintained that the so-called gubernatorial lifestyle was not a marital asset.

The McGreeveys split three months after the speech, leaving the governor's mansion and going their separate ways. She borrowed heavily to buy a \$430,000 house in Springfield; he's now openly gay, living in a house his boyfriend owns.