



No clear winners in McGreevey divorce

By ANGELA DELLI SANTI | Associated Press Writer
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TRENTON, N.J. - Dina Matos took a calculated risk and lost.

Offered a settlement said to top \$300,000 early in divorce talks with her gay ex-husband, former [New Jersey](#) Gov. James E. McGreevey, Matos turned it down. The epic, four-year drama that ensued cost each a half-million dollars and further drained the well in the court of public opinion.

"She got a little greedy," said matrimonial lawyer Joshua Forman, who has watched the McGreevey case closely. "Plain and simple, the guy was governor of New Jersey, he wasn't working for some huge corporation making a lot of money."

What did Matos get for all the bother? A lump sum payment of \$110,000, which represents half the assets the McGreeveys accumulated during the four years they lived together as Mr. and Mrs., much of that spent living in the New Jersey governor's mansion in Princeton.

McGreevey also was ordered to pay \$250 per week in support for the couple's only daughter, 6. The calculation was based on McGreevey's earnings in his last sustained full-time job — as governor — and his ex-wife's income in her prior job as a fundraiser at Columbus Hospital in Newark.

The judge overseeing the McGreeveys' acerbic divorce admonished both afterward:

"The McGreeveys clearly had agendas," wrote Union County Superior Court Judge Karen Cassidy. "As previously addressed, their anger seemed to override any ability to testify credibly or to be reasonable."

The ruling in the monthlong divorce case came nearly four years after McGreevey announced he was a "gay American" and said he had an affair with a male staffer. The aide denied the affair and said he was sexually harassed by the governor.

McGreevey, 51, is now a full-time Episcopal seminary student who testified during the trial that he relies on his boyfriend for household expenses and legal fees. He said if he were not in school, he'd have trouble finding a job because his name is tainted by political and sexual scandal.

Matos, 41, accused the former governor during the divorce trial of intentionally not working to avoid paying alimony and support.

The judge found some credibility in both arguments, but did factor the income of McGreevey's partner into the decision.

"We honor the principle that a current spouse has no obligation to support someone else's child while accounting for the reality that the current spouse may provide economic resources to the household," the judge wrote.

That touched off a wave of protest within the gay community, with activists wondering how a partner's assets could be considered if the couple could not be legally bound under New Jersey law.

"The problem is, New Jersey does not give same-sex couples like Jim and Mark (O'Donnell) the freedom to marry and to be legally equal spouses," said Steven Goldstein, head of Garden State Equality, the state's largest gay rights organization. "When the law gives a couple responsibilities without equality, the law must be changed."

The only issue yet to be decided is a separate fraud claim filed by Matos.

In it, she claims she is entitled to damages for being duped into marriage by a gay man who needed the cover of a wife to advance his political career.

While Cassidy did not specifically rule on the merits of the claim, she did strike down Matos' request to be compensated for 13 months she would have spent in the governor's mansion had McGreevey not resigned in disgrace.

"She was asking for the perks of a governor _ car, driver, clothing allowance," said Forman. "You get certain things when you have a job, not when you leave it, especially when you leave in disgrace."

Though each spent days on the stand publicly discussing the rise and fall of their marriage and the sorted details in between, neither have been willing to speak since it came to an end.