

Publication: Jnl Final Edition 8/2005-today; Date: Aug 9, 2008; Section: Campaign 08; Page: A7



THE EDWARDS STORY

Madrid: Edwards 'Has Let Us Down'

Local Reaction

By Jeff Jones Journal Politics Writer

John Edwards' best-known New Mexico backer said Friday that his just-admitted extramarital affair is a "great tragedy" of his own doing.

"It's the fall of a great man," said former state Attorney General Patricia Madrid, who headed up the New Mexico arm of Edwards' 2004 presidential campaign.

"I would like to see him recover. I think that he is a great leader — but I don't know if it's possible to come back from this, when you lose the trust of the country," Madrid said in a telephone interview from Pittsburgh, Pa., where she is working on the Democratic Party platform.

Madrid served as the unpaid state chair of Edwards' 2004 campaign before he became John Kerry's vice-presidential running mate. The Kerry/ Edwards ticket lost New Mexico that year by about 6,000 votes as President Bush rolled to his second term.

Madrid also backed Edwards' 2008 presidential bid before he dropped out earlier this year. She is now a national co-chair of the Democratic Party's platform committee for the coming national convention in Denver.

The news that Edwards may have had an affair while his wife was battling cancer began to receive substantial media attention more than a week ago, and Madrid — who describes herself as being in Edwards' close circle of political friends — said his backers were "hoping against hope" that it wasn't true.

"But when he didn't deny it outright, we all had suspicions. And now, of course, he's come forward and admitted it," Madrid said. "I'm devastated."

She said her initial thoughts upon hearing the news included, "What were you thinking? That this is so much more than having an affair. This is the welfare of our country, the welfare of our party. You're in the middle of a campaign. You have so many people believing in you and trusting you, and in a sense, he has let us down. And I think he knows that."

Madrid said she is also close to Edwards' wife, Elizabeth.

"I am hurting for both of them," she said.



