

Political Campaign Donation Patterns Show John Edwards was Local ‘Winner’

By David Wilder

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An investigation has found that Pitt County attorneys have given an estimated \$27,200 to the John Edwards campaign for the 2008 election cycle. ECU professors and administrators have donated at least \$7,160 to various candidates and political action committees.

The data, found at <http://campaignmoney.com>, only reports donations over \$200; smaller donations are not listed on the Web site. Donors included physicians, teachers, insurance company employees and others throughout Pitt County.

During the 2008 election cycle so far, the candidate that received the most money from Pitt County donors is John Edwards, who pocketed at least \$54,000 for his campaign. The PAC that received the most money is the North Carolina Republican Executive Committee; donors gave the committee \$6,837. The North Carolina Democratic Party has received \$5,500.

ECU professors and administrators were evenly distributed in their support of candidates, as the most common recipients have been Barack Obama, Hillary Clinton and John McCain. These are the candidates currently running for president in 2008.

One ECU professor, Chris Mansfield, director of the Center for Health Services Research and Development, donated \$250 to Barack Obama's campaign. "I see him as the preferred candidate for a number of reasons. For one, no one who has ran for president has written so well since John F Kennedy."

The donations in Pitt County are overwhelmingly in support of Democratic candidates and PACs, rather than Republicans. However, "this may just show who is willing to put their money where their mouth is, rather than indicating actual support in Pitt County," said Mansfield.

The reason for more Democratic Party support in Pitt County may be because John Edwards was a candidate for the 2008 presidential race, and he is from North Carolina, said David Davis, Pitt County elections director. "We are a non-partisan office, but I can tell you that most of this cycle's candidates filing locally have been democrats."

Davis said that voter registration is also increasing, "which is a sign that the county is growing and that there is rising political awareness. However, nearly 30,000 out of 100,000 registered voters in Pitt County registered this past year as unaffiliated."

One local donor described her decision to donate. "With ECU and Pitt County Memorial Hospital, education and health care are priority issues in Pitt County. The Democratic

Party is the one committed to these issues,” said Peggy Goodman, Brody School of Medicine emergency physician.

Goodman donated \$250 to the National Emergency Medicine Political Action Committee (NEMPAC). “NEMPAC addresses the concerns of the specialty of emergency medicine, emergency physicians and their patients,” she said.

In Pitt County, the zip code with donors who contributed the most money is 27858, located in Greenville, with \$84,303. Ayden (28513) had the least amount contributed, with a mere \$200 to John Edwards’ campaign. Several zip codes in the county, however, recorded no donations.