

PL7-- GARY HART INTERVIEW, "WHERE THE NEW DEMOCRATS WENT WRONG", SALON, 8/15/00

Where the New Democrats went wrong: Gary Hart says Clinton and Gore abandoned their base to expand the party, but says he'll support Gore anyway.

August 15, 2000 | LOS ANGELES -- Colorado Sen. Gary Hart was the original New Democrat when he ran for the party's presidential nomination in 1984 against Walter Mondale. Hart was ahead of his time in another way: He got derailed by a 1987 sex scandal, his affair with model Donna Rice, which would later seem tame in comparison with the Monica Lewinsky drama.

Hart spoke to the Shadow Convention on Los Angeles this week about how the new New Democrats lost their bearings. He told Salon that, despite some reservations, he's supporting Al Gore and says, "The Democratic Party is not beyond redemption.

You were seen as the original New Democrat in 1984. What were you about, and how did it differ from the Clinton-Gore version of "New Democrats"?

Our goal was to move the party forward without compromising its principles. These guys have gained power, but I'm not sure they maintained the principles.

What I had in mind was to expand the party beyond a shrinking New Deal base of basically organized labor, some minorities and old traditional Democrats. It wasn't to abandon those people, by any means. But it was somehow to appeal to young people and independent voters. I believed that there was an emerging new economy. We sought to capture people who understood that the economy of America was shifting away from processing raw materials into manufactured goods, and towards information technologies, communications and so forth.