

Keillor sues over tape made from speech

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — Garrison Keillor, former star of "A Prairie Home Companion," has sued National Public Radio and a New York distribution company for allegedly violating his copyright by selling a recorded speech.

In the lawsuit, filed Thursday in U.S. District Court here, Keillor claims he never gave the non-profit radio network permission to make commercial use of a speech he gave last year at the National Press Club in Washington.

"An author is entitled to decide which of his works he wants sold to the public," said Keillor's attorney, Samuel Heins. He said

Keillor wants to stop sales of the 45-minute cassette, which is called "Garrison Keillor, Back Home" and sells for \$10.95.

NPR spokeswoman Cate Cowan said the network handled Keillor's speech no differently than it does other press club talks by prominent people and that NPR's lawyers do not believe the network infringed on Keillor's copyright.

NPR included the speech in its catalog of cassettes for sale, and, according to the suit, sold rights to the speech to a record distributing company.

That company, Spoken Arts Inc. of New York City, took out an

advertisement last month in Publishers Weekly to promote Keillor's tape and three others to bookstores. Spoken Arts entitled the cassette "Garrison Keillor: Beyond Lake Wobegon" and listed its price as \$9.95.

Keillor's suit names both NPR and Spoken Arts as defendants. Spoken Arts employees who answered the company's telephone Thursday said President Joel Klein was unavailable for comment.

The speech was given last October while Keillor was promoting his book "Leaving Home." National Public Radio regularly broadcasts press club luncheon speeches.

According to Cowan, it announces at the end of each speech that cassette recordings are available for purchase.

In the speech, Keillor spoke about his feelings on having left Minnesota just as his beloved Minnesota Twins were about to win the World Series.

He also invited recordings of the speech. "If you have tape recorders, you are welcome to turn them on at this point," he said.

"You are welcome to use any of this if you want."

Heins says in the suit that Keillor filed for a copyright on the speech Feb. 26.