

# Keillor broadcasts from Corn Palace

■ Former Sen. George McGovern debuts his comedy chops.

MITCHELL (AP) — Garrison Keillor weaved bushels of corn jokes into his folksy radio show Saturday evening during a live two-hour broadcast from the Corn Palace.

A sold-out crowd of more than 3,100 joined about 4 million radio listeners for "A Prairie Home Companion," which featured former Sen. George McGovern's comedy debut.

McGovern, who spent most of his childhood in Mitchell and attended Dakota Wesleyan University, portrayed Methodist minister George Wesley McGuffey, who saved the Corn Palace by using the ancient art of "corn fu."

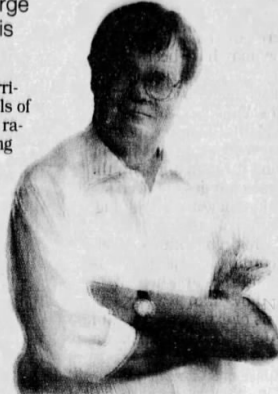
When one of the characters commented that he looked like the New Deal Democrat, the politician-turned-radio actor responded, "I've had that problem most of my life."

In trading politics for the role of a preacher in the skit, McGovern, 82, took on a role he planned to play since childhood.

The son of a fundamentalist Methodist minister, McGovern studied for the ministry for a year but opted for politics after flying bombers in World War II. He served four years in the U.S. House, 18 years in the U.S. Senate and ran for president three times.

McGovern joked on the radio show about his 1972 landslide loss to Richard Nixon, saying South Dakotans know how to deal with misery, but "it's success that confuses us."

Keillor worked in many more Mitchell jokes, including a funny radio ad for genetically engineered corn



Garrison Keillor

siding that was available in 14 shades of yellow.

The three-hour morning radio show he started on Minnesota Public Radio in 1969 eventually blossomed into "A Prairie Home Companion."

A dozen people watched the show's first live broadcast in 1974. Now, more than 500 public radio stations air it.

The Saturday evening show typically broadcasts from Fitzgerald Theater in St. Paul but also goes on the road.

Tickets for the show sold out to members of Friends of South Dakota Public Broadcasting. A rebroadcast of the show will be at 11 a.m. MDT today on SDPB radio stations.

Keillor opened with a tune telling how his father, during summer vacations from Minnesota to Montana, would stop at Mount Rushmore but always passed on the Corn Palace.

Off-air he joked: "I'm going to have to make one more trip for Wall Drug."



George McGovern