

Keillor calls Trump a liar, tax cheat during Iowa visit

ON POLITICS



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It was part folksy comedy, part old-time sing-along and just a bit of sharp-edged political commentary on Wednesday when Garrison Keillor held a fundraiser in Des Moines for U.S. Senate candidate Patty Judge.

Keillor, who retired this year from his national radio show "A Prairie Home Companion" brought an original poem that he said he had just written and was performing for the first time.

"... Donald Trump was not born in Queens, he was born in the Philippines; in a hotel in downtown Manila where his hair turned bright vanilla," Keillor recited.

Keillor's prose was more pointed than his poetry. He said Trump's birtherism was "pure racism." "This is a



KATHIE OBRADOVICH/THE REGISTER
Garrison Keillor appears with Democratic U.S. Senate candidate Patty Judge at a Des Moines fundraiser Wednesday.

shameless, shameless man, and I hate to think of people I know and respect and love voting for him. And so let's save them from it," he said.

He also called Trump "a man who has been completely taken over by alien forces" and a "tax cheat" who lies on a daily basis.

He wasn't quite as hard on Judge's opponent, incumbent Republican Sen. Chuck Grass-

ley. But he said Grassley "used to be the sort of Republican that I admired. We need Republicans because us liberals wander off the path from time to time."

But he said the Republican Party as led by Trump had lost its way. "I grew up with Republicans, and the loss of this party is to me a modern-day tragedy," he said.

In brief comments to

reporters before the event, Keillor said he offered to help Judge because there were no hot races in Minnesota this year.

"I came because we don't have a statewide in race in Minnesota. We have nothing. And so I came down here for the excitement of it, to see David against Goliath and to do my part for Democrats," he said.

He joked that as a writer, he sits at his computer in his pajamas.

"And this is my way of getting dressed up and going out among adults. Otherwise, I'd just stay at home," he said.

Judge said she was surprised to find Keillor's phone number on her call list one day and she almost swallowed her tongue when he answered the phone. "He said, 'Mrs. Judge, I know who you are, and this is no time to be tongue-tied. You have work to do, and I will help you,'" Judge said.

Before the evening was over, Keillor was leading the entire crowd of about 150 in a medley of hymns, folk songs and golden oldies ranging from "The Battle Hymn of the Republic" to Elvis' "I Can't Help Falling in Love with You."

This may be in the category of "you had to be there": But where else could you listen to Garrison Keillor sing a duet of "The Iowa Waltz" with state Rep. Mary Mascher? Only in Iowa.

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