

Keillor, MPR resolve dispute over archives

Deal allows public access to thousands of PHC shows.

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Minnesota Public Radio and Garrison Keillor said Friday that they have settled the public feud that started with allegations against Keillor of inappropriate behavior with a woman who worked on his show.

Under the agreement, MPR would once again allow public access to thousands of past shows of "A Prairie Home Companion" and "The Writer's Almanac," which the company had blocked when it severed

ties with Keillor in November.

MPR will also pay Keillor \$275,000 owed from past contracts, while Keillor agreed not to take legal action against the station. The agreement resolves all current and potential legal disputes between MPR and its parent company, American Public Media Group, and Keillor and his production company, Prairie Grand.

It does not preclude suits by others involved in the imbroglio, which came to light Nov. 29 when the station abruptly severed ties with the creator and longtime host of "A Prairie Home Companion" after learning of the accusations.



Associated Press

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The public media company immediately blocked access to the archives, which included 43 years of "A Prairie Home Companion" shows showcasing thousands of musicians and artists.

The company also forced a hurried name change to the iconic radio program, which
See **KEILLOR** on A5 ▶

Keillor, MPR settlement will free up PHC archives

• **KEILLOR** from Al has been hosted by Chris Thile since Keillor retired in July 2017.

MPR said an investigation concluded that Keillor had engaged in "dozens of sexually inappropriate incidents...over a period of years," including "unwanted sexual touching." All of the alleged misconduct involved a longtime female writer for the show.

Keillor has said the relationship was mutual and that he backed off when the staffer complained in 2015.

"What the agreement means is that I won't sue MPR for damages, and they will allow 'A Prairie Home Companion' and 'The Writer's Almanac' archives to be available to the public again," Keillor said in a statement. "And it means that we move

on to more interesting things, namely writing stories and creating a podcast. Compared to sitting in mediation, writing is one of life's great pleasures." Keillor declined an interview request.

The payment does not give MPR rights to the material, Keillor's attorney and brother-in-law Eric Nilsson said in an interview. Keillor and his production company have always maintained rights, but provided access to archives and publication through licensing agreements.

Part of the \$275,000 payment settles outstanding payments from contracts that were still in effect when MPR ended its relationship with Keillor, namely an agreement that he would produce daily "Writer's Almanac" segments and the company could

continue using the "A Prairie Home Companion" moniker on Thile's show.

A portion also goes to "bury the hatchet," Nilsson said.

"He's still very disappointed about what happened. We can't hide that fact," Nilsson said. "As disappointed as he is that this happened, he is hardly retired because of it. He's got a lot of energy and inspiration. In that regard we can expect a lot of rewarding material in the future."

The settlement agreement does not cover two former Prairie Home contributors whose accusations precipitated the downfall of the man whose talents and popularity helped create a public media empire that reached well beyond Minnesota's borders.

Allegations that Keillor behaved inappropriately were

first raised with MPR by Dan Rowles, formerly a 16-year employee of "A Prairie Home Companion." Later, a longtime female writer for the show also complained.

The broadcasts will be available within the next 15 days on their respective websites: prairiehome.org and writersalmanac.org. The sites currently redirect people to garrisonkeillor.com.

"These archives feature the work of thousands of talented artists, poets and musicians," MPR chief executive Jon McTaggart said in a statement. "We are pleased that these performances will once again be available to fans of these programs."

An MPR spokeswoman said the organization had nothing to add beyond the statement.

As part of the agreement,

Keillor and his production company plan to relocate the archives to another platform after three years.

Keillor's attorney said the goal would be to find an outlet that "appreciates the need to preserve a cultural treasure," such as the Library of Congress, the Smithsonian or a university.

Star Tribune staff writer Jeff Meitrodt contributed to this story.
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