

Teachers give Keillor keynote a standing O

Garrison Keillor delighted thousands at the Minnesota Education Association/Minnesota Federation of Teachers conference at the St. Paul Civic Center, telling them how important teachers were in his life.

"I am a child of public education," he said Thursday, in the keynote address to the two-day meeting.

His first-grade teacher wore sleeveless knit dresses and had arms that jiggled when she wrote on the blackboard, he said. ("We gave those arms names," he said.) Because he had trouble learning to read, she often asked him to stay after school to read to her as she graded papers. She told him she liked the sound of his voice.

"In this manner, she made me save my life," he said. "And I never knew I was in trouble."

Keillor railed against conservative politicians who he said are promoting "deeply radical" destructive ideas: Public schools should be good enough "for the children of janitors and the children of corporation presidents."

The teachers gave him a standing ovation.

— *Mary Jane Smetanka*