

Bathroom Reader

The More You Go, The More You Know

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NEW YEAR, NEW CONTENT IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN



At the same time that party goers ring in the New Year, copyright law enthusiasts in the United States celebrate the start of Public Domain Day. On this day, works that were published 95 years ago become part of the public domain. This year at midnight on New Year's Eve, all works first published in 1923 entered the public domain.

This Public Domain Day is the first mass release into the public domain during the digital age. The last mass expiration of copyright in the U.S. occurred 21 years ago. The reason for this gap is because of a change in copyright law that occurred in 1998. At that time, all works published before January 1, 1978, were entitled to copyright protection for 75 years; all author's works published on or after that date were under copyright for the lifetime of the creator, plus 50 years.

Through the power of

corporate lobbying, Congress added 20 years to the copyright term and created a "freeze period" in copyright expiration.

The start of the thaw is expected to have a dramatic impact on artistic expression and academic pursuits. Starting this year and every year to come until 2073, books, magazines, newspapers, movies and other materials from the Harlem Renaissance, the Great Depression, World War II and beyond will gradually become available.

"We can't predict what uses people are going to make of the work we make available," said Mike Furlough, executive director of online



archive, HathiTrust. "And that's what makes that so exciting."

#METOO IN THE FEDERAL JUDICIARY

The focus of Chief Justice Roberts' 2018 end-year report was the judiciary's efforts

in protecting law clerks and other employees from sexual harassment and other workplace misconduct. During the era of #MeToo and Times Up, the federal judiciary has been implicated in its share of high-profile scandals involving a former Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals judge, Alex Kozinski, and a current U.S. Supreme Court Justice, Brett Kavanaugh.

Justice Roberts does not refer to either of these incidents, and instead praises the judiciary for comparing "favorably to other government and private sector workplaces." Another sign of progress that Justice Roberts mentions is the newly-hired judicial integrity officer who will monitor workplace conduct issues and offer confidential guidance and counseling.

"The job is not yet done," Justice Roberts said. "The job is not finished until we have done all that we can to ensure that all of our employees are treated with fairness, dignity, and respect."

LEGAL WORD OF THE MONTH

Demurrer means to stay; to