



KOA Purchases Pigeon Forge/Gatlinburg KOA From Kelch Family After 50 Years Of Ownership

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KOA NEWS SERVICE (October 6, 2016) – Kampgrounds of America has purchased the Pigeon Forge/Gatlinburg KOA Holiday from franchisee Annie Kelch. The Kelch family has owned and operated the campground as a KOA for the past 50 years – the longest tenure of any KOA franchisee.

The campground was built in 1966 by Annie Kelch's father-in-law and mother-in-law, LaVerne and Gladys Kelch. Annie and her husband, Dick, purchased the property from his parents in 1979. Dick Kelch died suddenly in 1997, leaving Annie to run the campground with the help of her children, Eric and Heather.

"It's an honor to continue the tradition of great family camping at Pigeon Forge that was established by the Kelch family," said KOA CEO Pat Hittmeier. "The Kelch's did a wonderful job of taking care of their campers for the past five decades. We've got a few enhancements planned that will build on the legacy established by LaVerne, Gladys, Annie, Dick, Eric, Leslie and Heather."

"This is all working out so perfectly," said Annie Kelch. "I feel very, very at peace with it."

"When I drive by the KOA from now on, it will always be emotional," she said. "I'd prefer to think I'll just feel proud."

Eric Kelch, who had previously worked for Kampgrounds of America Inc. on special campground renovation projects, will again work for KOA on special projects planned at the Pigeon Forge/Gatlinburg KOA Holiday. His wife, Leslie, will be the manager of the campground.

Kampgrounds of America is celebrating its 54th Anniversary in 2016. KOA, the world's largest network of family-friendly campgrounds with 490 locations in North America, was born on the banks of the Yellowstone River in Billings, Montana in 1962. For more information, go to www.KOA.com or visit the KOA Pressroom at www.koapressroom.com.