

End of an Era: Oprah Winfrey to end celebrated TV talk show in 2011

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Oprah Winfrey will announce Friday that she's giving up her popular daytime show when her contract ends in Sept. 2011.

"We have the greatest respect for Oprah and we wish her nothing but the best in her future endeavors, we do know anything she turns her hand to will be a great success," said a spokesman for the CBS Television Studios, which distributes her show, which airs on ABC in New York.

"We look forward to working with her for the next several years, and hopefully afterwards as well."

Winfrey's team Thursday notified stations that carry the show, along with other companies connected to Harpo Productions that the decision was made. Locally, WABC/Ch. 7 broke the news on air and on its Web site.

"Tomorrow, Oprah will announce live on 'The Oprah Winfrey Show' that she has decided to end what is arguably one of the most popular, influential and enduring programs in television history," Harpo president Tim Bennett said in the letter, which told stations to share the news.

"The sun will set on the 'Oprah' show as its 25th season draws to a close on September 9, 2011."

Winfrey had previously said she would tell the world whether she would stick beyond the 2011 end date of her contract before the end of the year.

She is closing out one of the most successful runs of a daytime talk show in television history. Over the course of her run, she's beaten every competitor, and proven she can move people to vote, buy books, clothes, and even face cream.

While her daily ratings are not as big as they used to be - no show's are - its unlikely another daytime talk show will be able to replace the drawing power of "Oprah" anytime soon.

The announcement comes after a series of high profile interviews aired, including Tuesday's sitdown with former Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin. That appearance generated Winfrey's biggest audience since 2007.

Winfrey and Discovery Networks have a partnership to launch the Oprah Winfrey Network (OWN), which she will program. It had been scheduled for 2009, and the latest buzz has it going live in 2011.