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Late Show; host David Letterman to retire in 2015

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USPA News - Comedian David Letterman will retire as host of the "Late Show" on CBS in 2015, he said during the taping of his show in New York City on Thursday afternoon, more than two decades after he began hosting the popular late-night television show. Letterman, 66, said he had called CBS Corp.

President and CEO Leslie Moonves on Thursday afternoon to inform him of his decision to step down. "I phoned him just before the program, and I said, `Leslie, it`s been great, you`ve been great, and the network has been great, but I`m retiring`," he said. The comedian has been a well-known face on American television for more than three decades, first as the host of `Late Night` on NBC from 1982 through 1992 and then as the host of `Late Show` on CBS since 1993, making him the longest-serving late-night talk show host in American TV history. The two shows have received 108 Emmy nominations over the years, winning eight of them. Letterman told his audience on Thursday that he had previously discussed his eventual retirement with Moonves, explaining that both had agreed to work together on the circumstances and timing. "We don`t have the timetable for this precisely down - I think it will be at least a year or so, but sometime in the not too distant future," he said. "2015 for the love of God, in fact, (band leader) Paul (Shaffer) and I will be wrapping things up." The popular television host, whose current contract expires next year, made his announcement to a standing ovation from the audience at the Ed Sullivan Theater in New York City. "I just want to reiterate my thanks for the support from the network, all of the people who have worked here, all of the people in the theater, all the people on the staff, everybody at home, thank you very much," he added. Moonves, in a statement after Thursday`s announcement, indicated that he was not surprised after Letterman decided on only a one-year extension for his most recent contract. "We knew this day was getting closer, but that doesn`t make the moment any less poignant for us," he said. "Dave has given television audiences thousands of hours of comedic entertainment, the sharpest interviews in late night, and brilliant moments of candor and perspective around national events," Moonves added. "He`s also managed to keep many celebrities, politicians and executives on their toes - including me. There is only one David Letterman. His greatness will always be remembered here."

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