



INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY BLOG

End of a (Copyright) Era

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The copyright for Disney's Steamboat Willie expired January 1, 2024.

The copyright for Winnie the Pooh has also expired, and next year the copyright for Tigger expires.

When Winnie the Pooh, Steamboat Willie, and Tigger were first created copyright registrations lasted up to 56 years. In response to lobbying by Disney (and others) the term for a copyright registration was extended to 95 years. Copyrights allow the copyright owner to stop others from copying and displaying their copyrighted works. They also allow copyright owners to stop others from making "derivative works" - works that are derived from (based on) prior copyrighted works. Disney's ability to control its copyrights played an important role in its success.

Copyrights are also very important in the music industry. (There is a reason why musicians re-master their earlier works - they don't own or control the copyrights in the original master recordings.) Whether you have movies, music, or software, copyrights allow you to control your works for nearly a century, and can be an important part of your IP portfolio.

For questions about copyrights, contact a Sandberg Phoenix attorney.