

# Eric the Readable Author

BY BILL MCLEAN  
ILLUSTRATION BY BARRY BLITT

Lawyer Eric Matlin's very first case pitted an owner of a wedding dress against a tailor. Matlin represented the tailor in 1990.

"The customer was unsatisfied with the tailor's work," Matlin recalls. "I remember thinking how much I hated the thought of being in court. Unusual, I know — a lawyer who wants nothing to do with a courtroom. Many aspects of it had never appealed to me ... the performing part of it, the thinking fast on my feet, even the surroundings of the courtroom."

"Thankfully we ended up settling that case."

Some two years later he discovered his niche in the vast field of law: estate planning. It fit the current Matlin Law Group partner — no tailor needed — to a T (uxedo), though in the early going he often arrived for work at his Northbrook office in a pair of cut-off jeans and a T-shirt.

"I no longer have a ponytail, and I don't play reggae music during business hours," the 64-year-old Winnetkan says in a booth at Max and Benny's in Northbrook, after ordering a spinach omelet and a lightly toasted bagel with cream cheese. "What I do today, what I love to do in my profession, is educate. I enjoy educating more than I enjoy practicing law. Estate planning allows me to proselytize, to sell peace of mind. I want to make the process of estate planning as transparent and understandable as possible. Whether you're rich or poor, 18 or 108, healthy or seriously ill, estate planning provides harmony, and it's a gift to loved ones."

"Practically everyone," the graduate of Maine East High School and John Marshall Law School adds, "needs some degree of estate planning."

Matlin wrote his second book — *Not Dead Yet (so plan your estate)*, Ozanam Publishing, Inc. — and launched it in 2017. If books about an arcane subject matter were rated for creativity on a 1-10 scale, with 10 being fabulously original, Matlin's 296-pager would rate a ... 15, at least. The title comes from a movie line in a scene from *Monty Python and the Holy Grail*, and the book features a fully illustrated graphic novel that serves breezily as a book within a book. Each of the 24 chapters in *Not Dead Yet* is preceded by a series of colorful comic book-style panels; the theme of the ensuing chapter is cap-

tured via the vivid drawings and relatable text in the speech bubbles.

Think of reading a Marvel comic book sequence to break up an educational undertaking.

The graphic novel portion of *Not Dead Yet* tells the story (co-written by Troy Locker Palmer) of a character named Don, his family, his friends and why estate planning is important. The graphic novel was illustrated by Palmer and designed by Gabriel Bautista.

"Some people learn better through visuals than they do through the written word," Matlin says of the primary reason behind his motif choice for the book, which took him seven years to complete.

"People have told me they love the unique look of it, that they've never seen a serious subject

matter presented in such an entertaining manner."

Matlin dedicated the book to his wife, Glo, a broker with Coldwell Banker.

"As always," Eric Matlin writes before the

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preface, "the love of my life."

Eric and Glo raised their children, Zack and Arielle, in Glencoe before moving to Winnetka in 2005. Zack and his wife, Katie, have a nine-month-old daughter named Hannah, already a fan of Grandpa Eric, the ukulele player.

"I learned to play the instrument about eight months ago because I wanted to exercise a different part of my brain," Matlin says. "I wanted to do something different. I know how to play two tunes, one by Elvis Presley."

Arielle and Sean Hofherr got married earlier this month.

Sales of *Not Dead Yet* support a variety of charities, including The Josselyn Center, of which Matlin is a board member. The mission of the Northfield-based organization is to provide mental health services that make lives better for clients, their families and the community.

"I am hitting my stride as a professional, as an author, as a family man," Matlin says. "I've never been happier than I am right now, a man in his 60s with a wonderful family and a super group of colleagues. I feel so fortunate that I get to do what I do for people of all ages. Blessed, I feel blessed. My staff [at Matlin Law Group] is fantastic and dedicated to quality work. We're going to put up a word, 'Empowering', on a wall in our office soon, for all to see."

"People," he adds, "feel empowered as they go through the steps of estate planning. Estate planning benefits everyone. Our mission is to guide them with professionalism and sensitivity."

Matlin Law Group, P.C., (847) 770-6600, is located at 500 Skokie Boulevard, Suite 100, in Northbrook. For more information about Eric Matlin's second book and to purchase copies, visit [notdeadyetbook.net](http://notdeadyetbook.net). Matlin is scheduled to speak at Winnetka Public Library on May 20, beginning at 2 p.m.



Eric Matlin