

# WINNETKA LIVING



A Lawyer Who  
Educates His Clients  
**ERIC MATLIN**



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*Photography by Scott Edwards / efg image*



# Eric G. Matlin

## Loosening Up On the Lake

By Paul Clements

**A**torney Eric Matlin's perfect day begins and ends on the shores of Lake Michigan. It starts by getting up early and gazing east to see the sun rise and shimmer over the sparkling water as he strolls the beach near his Winnetka home. Next he heads into his Northbrook office where a busy schedule awaits, but his perfect day has a special appointment, a visit with his granddaughter Hannah. Wrapping up his

perfect day means extending his commute, by more than two hours. That's so he can make it to his getaway home in South Haven, MI in time to stand on his porch and watch the sun as it sets over Lake Michigan, and his perfect day is complete.

The symbolism of the sun rising and setting over a vast body of water isn't lost on Eric, whose firm focuses on estate planning and administration. The power, energy and light of



Eric and Glo Enjoying South Haven

the sun that sustains life in all of its vibrancy, shines over a lake that can represent both stability and permanence when it is calm, or the unfathomable and unknown when it is stormy and tempestuous. Eric ensures that his clients are better prepared for the storm and that the sun will continue to shine on their families after they are gone.

"Matlin Law Group is a good karma place," Matlin said, and that's readily apparent as you sit down to talk with him in his office. His vibe is relaxed, friendly and welcoming. His door stays open and his staff is comfortable popping in for a quick question, knowing they are going to be received with a smile.

What most people don't know is that Karma is a spiritual discipline consisting of 12 Laws and Matlin weaves them all into his life and work.

*Law No. 1: The Great Law - whatever we put into the universe will come back to us.*

"I am passionate about everyone's varying need for estate planning," Matlin said. "Understanding family dynamics are important to me, because I want families to stay together after they've lost a loved one. On a personal level, I am thrilled with where I'm at in my life and I want that to come across to people. There's a level of urgency to what I do too, and I want people to acknowledge that certain death and potential incapacity are not calendar items. Wills, trusts and powers of attorney benefit everyone aged 18 to 90 plus. It's just a matter of degree."



*From left to right, me, my wife Glo, my daughter, the bride Arielle, Arielle's husband Sean Hofherr (founder of Hofherr Meat Co., Northfield), my daughter-in-law Katie, my son Zack and my granddaughter Hannah*

*Law No. 5: The Law of Responsibility - we are responsible for what happens in our lives.*

Besides being a lawyer, Matlin is also an author and public speaker. "Tell me where and when, and I'll come speak to your group," he told me. His book, **Not Dead Yet, so plan your estate**, is a go-to guide for lawyers, financial advisors and clients alike, combining legal text with a visually engaging full-story-arc graphic novel. It's a page-turner that follows a family tree through births and deaths, highs and lows, wealth and ruin, long-lost relations and lives destroyed. Its story demonstrates different needs and potential nightmare scenarios for those who don't bother.

"I am very empathetic and tuned into family dynamics," Matlin said. "I'm not about taking forms and shoving people into boxes. Rather, I uncover problems and offer solutions."

*Law No. 4: The Law of Growth - By changing ourselves, we change our lives.*

Matlin's road began on Chicago's south side where he was born, but he did most of his growing up further north, in Morton Grove. He really set his course for success when in 1975 he married the love of his life, Gloria. The happy couple have been married for 43 years and he gives "Glo" all the credit, because her successful career in real estate allowed him to patiently build a law practice, surrounded by mentors, but having never worked for another lawyer. He is proud of that, as well as the Matlin Law Group team that has evolved over the past 25 years.

Like Eric, Glo is a trusted expert in her field, known as much for her grace as for her tenacity and consummate professionalism. She consistently ranks in the Top 1% of Coldwell Banker agents in performance success for the last 25 years, and among

its 3,500 members, was named North Shore-Barrington Association of Realtors Humanitarian of the Year in 2018 for her community outreach and charitable endeavors on behalf of the company charity.

The couple have two children, Zack and Arielle. Zack and his wife Katie live in Northbrook. They are the proud parents of Hannah and they are expecting their second child, a boy, by the end of May. Zack followed in his mother's footsteps and is also a successful Realtor. Arielle, a food blogger, has a second job, helping her husband Sean operate his Hofherr Meat Co. butcher shop in Northfield, where they are sticklers for locally sourced meats and strive to provide customers with the food selections they need to make restaurant-quality meals at home.

Eric also has a flair for the dramatic as evidenced by Chapter 1 ("Tie Up Loose Ends, While You Can Still Make a Knot") of his book, where he writes:

"The more carefully you plan today, the less angst your loved ones will experience tomorrow. Putting your affairs in order casts your spirit in a way that perpetuates your life path and sharpens the focus of your legacy. Yet if you do nothing, your inaction can compound the grief and burden put on others and may ultimately diminish your life's work."

*Law No. 6: The Law of Connection: The past, the present and the future are all connected.*

He then goes on to characterize life as "The Big Roulette Wheel" and offers his own special brand of "Estate Planning Mojo" to ensure that when your number comes up (death), your number actually comes up (a winner). What does estate planning mojo look like?

"Estate planning mojo means using your heart, and not simply your head, to spread

your own brand of magic in unique ways. Though estate planning mojo cannot be quantified, its value is unmistakable."

Here are just a few examples of what estate planning mojo may look like for you:

- College Student – You may not think you need any written estate-plan docs, but if you accidentally bang your head, your parents, already outraged that they pay your tuition but don't have a right to see your grades, get a dreaded 3am call, telling them you're in the hospital, but no more info without either your consent or a HIPAA authorization. While you're thinking about that, consider who you

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*Walking Maizie*

want to be your agent under a healthcare power of attorney.

- Immature Beneficiaries – Can't control from the grave? Sure you can. If you think your heirs may treat your hard-earned assets like play money, use a trust to prevent that from happening.
- Blended Families – Just leaving it to chance that your children and a surviving spouse with other children of his or her own will take care of each other? A common recipe for disaster.

"Charity begins at home, but does not end there," Matlin also writes. He always advocates for charity, because "once you're dead, you won't need your nest egg anymore." Do you really want to leave it ALL to your children? Leaving gifts to charity outright works fine for most, but in larger estates, a charitable trust or foundation provide benefits back to the family and your name can live on, like John D. MacArthur, once the second wealthiest person in the country, whose name would have been forgotten long ago by most but for the foundation he established, which famously distributes "genius awards" and gets numerous mentions every day on NPR.

*Law No. 8: The Law of Giving and Hospitality - Our behavior should match our thoughts and actions.*

Matlin has gratefully served on the board at The Josselyn Center in Northfield, where they



provide outpatient mental health services, including clinical evaluations, assessments, testing, counseling and therapy, as well as community programs, including the "Living Room," a less traumatic and more empowering alternative to the ER for adults experiencing a mental health crisis. Thanks to its generous donors and partners, The Josselyn Center is able to provide compassionate, quality, affordable care using a sliding-fee scale, and is the only Medicaid provider of psychiatric services in a 375 square-mile area that includes a wide swath of Northern Cook and much of Lake County.

Every Thursday evening Matlin visits the Lieberman Center in Skokie where he spends an hour reading to residents and discussing current events with them. He also supports Family Promise Chicago North Shore, an organization that provides emergency services and a pathway to self-sufficiency for homeless families.

Now 65, Matlin isn't considering retirement anytime soon. "Educating people about estate planning makes a greater impact than anything else I would do," he said. That's especially true when you can make any day your perfect day and when you're prepared for the inevitable.

Ready to plan your estate? Visit [www.matlinlawgroup.com](http://matlinlawgroup.com) or call Matlin Law Group at 847-770-6600 for a no-cost consultation, and score a free copy of **Not Dead Yet, so plan your estate.**

*Law No. 12: The Law of Significance and Inspiration - Rewards are the result of the effort and energy we put into it.*

Life Events - Estate Planning Needed  
18-24 Years old with few assets - POA for Healthcare & HIPAA Authorization

25-34 Years old still single with a few more assets and some credit history - Add POA for Property for such things as tax filings & credit cards & a simple will to direct a few items and ensure your pets have a home

35-39 Years old - Updated will for assets to family and appoint a guardian if you have minor children

40-54 Years old - Create trust to ensure insurance \$ & other assets will be used for your children's benefit and not entirely dissipated when they become legal adults at 18 or 21

55-59 Years old - Update estate plan to name children in fiduciary capacities instead of siblings or parents

60-69 Years old - Update your trust to provide for both your elderly parents and descendants

70-79 Years old - Consider updating documents as personal or financial changes occur; if large estate, consider depleting assets by gifting to family for tax & other reasons

80+ - Clarify wishes upon potential incapacity; finalize your charitable legacy

# WINNETKA LIVING

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