



Mary Matalin and James Carville took the stage for a recent appearance at the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce.

# POLITICAL OPPOSITES ATTRACT

## MATALIN, CARVILLE SHARE MANY SIMILARITIES, INSIGHTS

By Tom Schuman

**S**eparate phone calls – one in mid-July and the other in early August – to Mary Matalin and James Carville found them with typically busy schedules. Press interviews, writing and publishing books, a little campaigning, spending time with the children and more were on the agendas.

The pair opposed each other in the 1992 Bush-Clinton presidential race – she as the deputy campaign manager for the Republicans and he as the key strategist for the Democrats – before coming together in “real life.” Careers as highly popular and effective political consultants and tacticians have evolved into numerous movie, television, radio and writing opportunities.

Matalin and Carville will be the keynote speakers at the Indiana Chamber’s 17th Annual Awards Dinner on Wednesday, November 8 at the Indiana Convention Center. Allow *BizVoice*® to introduce you to this fascinating duo.

**BizVoice®:** As you travel around the country doing appearances together, what do you enjoy about those experiences? What do you take away from them?

**Mary Matalin:** “I really need to get outside the Beltway. There is a very myopic, distorted view of the world when you are just inside the Beltway, only talking to the press and your own colleagues. You have to get outside and see how real and ordinary, everyday normal citizens think. I’m always struck by how different, more civil, more practical people are outside the Beltway. I really need it to keep my faith in politics. I always learn something. I really like people who have to make a payroll. They are the most practical and common sense people out there.”

**James Carville:** “Our best audiences, mine anyway, tend to be more Republican – believe it or not. Generally, people are wanting to have a good time. They are less cynical and like to be entertained, which makes it a good kind of event. You always learn something.”

**BV:** What type of things have you learned, or what stands out as a strange or bizarre occurrence on the road?

**MM:** “One of the things that I always learn is the constant reinforcement of what I politically and philosophically believe in – that the government does not create wealth. The people create wealth, but the government’s intrusive ability is enormous to people who are trying to run a businesses or meet a payroll. What I like to learn is how what we do here affects where people live. That’s the actual literal application of policy in real life.

“The other thing I always learn is priorities. People get their hair on fire and panty hose in a knot over these big fights here, but people (across the country) know how to prioritize all the different issues that are before us.”

**JC:** “Over the years, a lot of it is cyclical. Obviously the atmosphere was different during the Clinton/Lewinsky deal. In an election year it would be different. Every now and then you get a question like: ‘What are three things that you and your wife agree on?’ There is an old kind of joke that they used to say New Orleans is a city with 500 restaurants with five recipes. If I get asked 1,000 questions in a year, 900 of them will be the same five in one variation or another.”

**BV:** So many opportunities have come your way outside of politics. What’s enjoyable about those? Why is that a path you have chosen?

**MM:** “I didn’t choose TV. When President Bush 41 (George Herbert Walker Bush) lost (in 1992), I didn’t have a job and TV just sort of fell in my lap from having kind of been an advocate. I’ve never aspired to be a media person. I have continued to fill the role as an advocate, always wanting to be a thinking conservative, and that is still everything I did on TV and on the radio. The radio I did want to do. It was sort of a continuation of my conservative education. And the books I do like because I’m only publishing contemporary conservative thinking books.

“Everything I have done outside of politics has remained somehow attached to advocating and advancing conservative thought. That’s the thread that runs through all of it, as opposed to, ‘I want to be a media person. I want to be a publisher. I want to

do this.’ I am 53 and when I was born there were no conservative ideas in action. And now it’s the pre-eminent organizing principle in government around the world. That did not happen by accident. It happened by a lot of vigilance on the part of the writers and the thinkers. That is how it all ties together for me. It’s not just being on TV or on the radio.”

**BV:** If not for politics, would any of your many outside involvements be potential full-time careers?

**JC:** “I’m 61 years old and my life has been a constant fight against regular predictable employment, and so far I’m winning. I’m going to continue to do a lot of different things. That is what I like doing. I’ve got to do a radio show today at 3 o’clock. My day started out with the CNN thing, I did an interview for a book the one guy was writing and I’m working on my own book, working on the movie and doing something else for a friend; then I’ve got phone calls and doing the sports radio show today. So I kind of like doing a lot of different things.”

The XM Radio show features Carville and Luke Russert, son of 2004 Indiana Chamber Annual Dinner speaker and “Meet the Press” host Tim Russert.

“I think it is going really well. What I like about it is we don’t need to focus on how good we are. The only question I want to focus on is, “Are we getting better?” Because if we are getting better, eventually we are going to get good. And I think we are getting a lot better. We are more comfortable. We are learning what works and what doesn’t work. The show that we put on this weekend is going to be a lot better than the show we put on a month ago, and that is what I care about.”

**BV:** With your many accomplishments both inside the political world and in other areas, is there anything you haven’t done yet that you would like to do?

**MM:** “I’ve been doing it for 26 years, so I have done quite a bit of what I’d like to do. I don’t think I’m going to quit doing it. I



## Taking a New Approach

*'Freakonomics' Author to Share Insights with Chamber Members*

By Jonathan Wales

Somewhere between forming a rock band, converting to Judaism after being raised Catholic and co-authoring the national bestseller "Freakonomics," Stephen Dubner became known as unconventional. You may even call him a rebel.

Dubner, the eighth child of a New York newspaperman, discovered at a young age that writing was in his blood. His first published work appeared in the children's magazine *Highlights*.

Perhaps the first public display of Dubner's rebellious side came during his undergraduate studies at Appalachian State University. It was there that Dubner formed the musical group The Right Profile. Far from the typical garage band with moderate talent, The Right Profile was quickly signed by Arista Records. It was this musical break that transplanted Dubner to New York City.

The call to write returned and Dubner traded in his music career to earn a master's degree in writing from Columbia University, where he also taught. During this time, Dubner made some exciting discoveries about his lineage, which helped lead him to adopt the Jewish faith. His parents were devout Roman Catholics, but his family's heritage was Jewish. Journalistic skill and a passion for truth guided Dubner's search for spiritual clarity. He later chronicled this experience in his award-winning book, "Turbulent Souls."

It's easy to see why someone like Dubner would be attracted

to the story of a young rogue economist who was rapidly making a name for himself by defying conventional wisdom. His profile of economist Steven Levitt for *The New York Times Magazine* was the start of the relationship that led to "Freakonomics."

Dubner and Levitt effectively break down the potentially complicated study of economics to an analysis of how people get what they want – or need. The duo explore topics ranging from the inner-workings of a crack gang to campaign finance and the telltale marks of a cheating schoolteacher. They even provide a startling look at the secrets of the Ku Klux Klan. Dubner's experience as a journalist is clearly seen as his poignant questions dismantle the complex to create a provocative view of these topics and the world around us.

An unconventional look at the economics of everything, "Freakonomics" has evolved from a book to an entire field of study. Dubner is now a regular guest on "Good Morning America" and hosts a "Freakonomics Friday" segment on ABC's "World News Tonight." He continues to work with Levitt by co-writing a monthly Freakonomics column for *The New York Times Magazine*.

Dubner is bringing his unconventional style and lively wit to the Indiana Chamber of Commerce's annual membership meeting and volunteer awards luncheon on November 8. The event, as well as the afternoon program that features an election update, is open to all Chamber members.



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## Mary Matalin *Selected career highlights*

- Appeared with her husband in the 1992 movie “The War Room”
- With her husband, wrote “All’s Fair: Love, War and Running for President”
- Host of “Equal Time” television show on CNBC and “Crossfire” on CNN
- Host of “The Mary Matalin Show” on the CBS Talk Radio network
- Appeared with her husband in 2003 HBO television show “K Street”
- In 2004, published the book “Letters to My Daughters”
- Senior positions in the George Bush presidential campaign in 1988 and with the Republican National Committee
- Assistant to President George W. Bush and counselor to Vice President Dick Cheney until 2003
- Runs a conservative publishing division at Simon & Schuster

## James Carville *Selected career highlights*

- Appeared with his wife in the 1992 movie “The War Room”
- With his wife, wrote “All’s Fair: Love, War and Running for President”
- Co-host of “Crossfire” on CNN until its final broadcast in June 2005; appears frequently on CNN’s “The Situation Room”
- Co-host of “60/20 Sports” on XM Radio
- Appeared with his wife in 2003 HBO television show “K Street”
- Cameo appearances, as well as more extensive roles, in a number of television programs and movies – including “Spin City,” “King of the Hill,” “Family Guy,” “Old School,” “The People vs. Larry Flynt” and “Wedding Crashers”
- Author or co-author of several books, including “We’re Right, They’re Wrong: A Handbook for Spirited Progressives” and “Take It Back: Our Party, Our Country, Our Future” (January 2006)
- Winning streak in prominent statewide campaigns – Robert Casey, Pennsylvania; Wallace Wilkinson, Kentucky; Frank Lautenberg, New Jersey; Zell Miller, Georgia – began in 1986
- Strategist for Bill Clinton campaign for president in 1992
- Consultant and strategist for a variety of foreign campaigns

cannot, with the kids, go and run campaigns anymore. This is not something that I haven’t done, but I would like to get back to a political system where we are debating ideas and we’re not attacking each other and each other’s motivations. I hope before I get out that it gets back to people having appreciation and calling for ideas. I would also like to do more with international democracy. Building it is really fulfilling as people can see the way to a brighter future for their own kids. In American politics, I can’t think of a job I didn’t do, which includes making and bringing in the coffee.”

**JC:** “I would like to do some more sports. If I saw myself doing more of something and less of something else in say four years from now, when I’m 65 as opposed to be 61, I would like to be doing 20% less politics and 20% more sports.”

**BV:** Who are some of the favorite people that you’ve come to know through your work?

**MM:** “One of my favorite people in the world, and I have known him for a long time, is Gov. Mitch Daniels. He is obviously one of the smartest and one of the most capable. He is a really

good human being. You know him there, but he is just relentlessly thoughtful, kind, smart and everything you appreciate in a human being. The longer I’m in politics, the fewer people you know of Mitch’s caliber who get in it and stay in it. I’m delighted that he ran for office and is serving there.

“My other favorite person in the world is President Bush 41. I also like these young people that get into politics. They are just fun – to watch them work and be idealistic about it. They are really an interesting and good bunch of people.”

**JC:** “George Stephanopoulos, who I’ve been friends with and I have been on the phone with almost every day since 1992.” He runs down a list of other close friends, many that date back to the pre-Clinton days when he helped guide gubernatorial victories such as Robert Casey in Pennsylvania in 1986 and Zell Miller in Georgia in 1990. “In most every campaign I have made lifelong relationships.”

**BV:** Are there some common attributes among those people – the ones you have established those relationships with?

**JC:** “Those people that aided work on campaigns are going to be interested in politics to start with, and they are going to attempt to be more down to earth. Most of them are pretty big sports fans because I am. Jon Macks (currently the head writer for “The Tonight Show” with Jay Leno) and I talk every day. We started working together in 1986 in the Pennsylvania governor’s race. I’ll call him on November 8 and say, ‘Hey, look, I’m in Indiana and it’s the day after the election, and what’s a couple of jokes you’ve got.’ He knows what we can do here and play something off the Hoosiers. He’s been a good friend of mine now for 20 years. I’m very fortunate. The fortunate thing I tell my family about politics is that I’ve formed some really lasting relationships.”

**BV:** Carville’s expertise has gone international, working with approximately 15 different heads of state around the world. Is that process dramatically different from what you’ve done previously?

**JC:** Whether speaking to the Indiana Chamber or working on a campaign in Argentina, he says, “It’s all about communicating. It’s not what you know or what you think, it is what you are able to communicate to people about what you know and what you think. That is pretty universal. That is basically what I try to do. If I consider myself to have any kind of expertise in anything, it is not telling people what not to say but sometimes what to say and how it will effectively get across the point you want to make.”

**BV:** Matalin has been involved in various get-out-the-vote and

democracy programs, including several in the Middle East and Afghanistan. Is it frustrating to see some of the vote totals and percentages of people that actually vote?

**MM:** "That doesn't frustrate me in a conventional sort of way. What is frustrating is people don't understand the magnitude of being able to vote. We take it for granted. There are very, very many places in the world where people do not have a voice. The consequences of not having a voice are just unfathomable to us. And what is frustrating to me is that people take that right for granted. The second thing that is frustrating to me is that people are so cynical about politics, because again democracy is an incredible system. When you travel as much as I do you see what sacrifices people make. But the actual low voter turnout doesn't frustrate me because I would rather have fewer well-informed people voting than more 'check the box people.' "

**BV:** What's the most difficult thing about juggling professional obligations with personal and family responsibilities?

**MM:** "The secret is what every woman knows. I'm not making this a gender issue, but the secret is you can't do it. You absolutely cannot do it all the time. You can't juggle, you can't balance. I prefer to think of it as integrating – to the extent that you can accept that some days you'll do some things better and not feel guilty about not doing everything

perfect every day. If you can do that, then you are OK.

"One of the ways we do it is we prioritize the kids, of course, but the kids are interested in our things. We do bring them to political events that they want to go to. We don't force them; we don't indoctrinate them. Matty went yesterday to a George Allen (Republican senator from Virginia) event with me. And they have been to Mrs. Clinton's events. They have been to the White House. They go to book stuff with me. And I'm interested in their things. The one way to make it work with kids is if you are lucky enough to have common interests."

Carville discusses his schedule overcrowding and how, in the past, he would place the "blame" on staff members. When he finds himself going in too many directions today, he asks who put something on his calendar, and the staff lets him know he's the one who did it.

**JC:** "It gets away from me and the downside to that is you get out on the road so much and you get cranky. I'm not as young as I used to be.

"We try to spend time when we are on the road together. After the Kentucky speech (in late July), we had dinner and talked and watched the news together. That is what we call our time

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## Matalin/Carville

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for each other, and a lot of times we will do it on the road.”  
(The same might hold true in Indianapolis). “I won’t eat before a speech because I like to be full of coffee. I can’t come down. When I get up there, I will be up. I’ve got to have adrenalin.”

**BV:** Your politics are obviously on the different ends of the scale. What about your life outside politics? What are some of the biggest differences or similarities?

**MM:** “Politics is our only difference. Our philosophies are different, but our appreciation for the political system is exactly the same. Everything else we completely agree on. The family being the center of life, how we live, where we live, where the kids go to school, where we vacation, what kind of cars, the allegiance to our parents. All of our values are very traditional.”

**JC:** “I think there are more similarities honestly. We tend to get into arguments about like the Iraq war or something like that. When we get into that, it gets into a shouting match. But every now and then, like everybody else, we sometimes get into arguments. Sometimes our arguments are about politics and she always accuses me of justifiably agreeing with her just to shut her up.”