

## Hardball

To WBAL-TV General Manager Jordan Wertlieb, the ultimate achievement in the TV news biz comes right after the news: being parodied on "Saturday Night Live."

By that measurement, Chris Matthews has reached the pinnacle being spoofed on SNL by Darrell Hammond. And that's how the former presidential speechwriter-cum-print journalist-cum-political pundit was introduced at Wednesday's Greater Baltimore Committee annual meeting, where more than 900 area leaders gathered at the Hyatt Regency in Charm City.

Matthews didn't disappoint, delivering 30 minutes that touched almost wholly on the presidential race, interspersing comedy and punditry.

He even offered some self-deprecation about the timing of Tuesday's final primary results in Indiana. "Well, I get done at 1 [a.m.] and they announce the results at 1:15," he cracked. "Shows how important I am."

When Matthews predicted — not going too far out on the limb — that it would be John McCain vs. Barack Obama for the presidency, applause was scattered, but slightly louder for Obama.

"I thought this was a business group," Matthews tsk-tsked. "Turning tail! Boy, not very loyal."

America needs to learn from other countries instead of making fun of them, Matthews said.

"The French seem to make all our mistakes first, so why don't we pay attention? They were in Indochina, had a half million men there, we went in, made fun of the French, we came out," he said. "They were in North Africa, they did counter-insurgency, they were nation-building, they had torture ... it didn't work out, then we tried it all. Unbelievable!"

Who's to blame? How about someone seated in the front row?

"Meanwhile, we called them Freedom Fries and laughed at the French," Matthews added. "Peter Franchot, it's your fault. This French American here, he's responsible for this pillage."

How did America get to this point? Matthews asked, then answered: Monica Lewinsky.

"So we elected a president who goes to bed with his wife at 9:30 every night," he cracked. "That was our particular solution to a particular problem. It wasn't grand. It wasn't a global issue, but it was a source of embarrassment, so we solved it the only way we knew. Who hangs out with their wife? We were going to put Dagwood in the office at that point. We just wanted the sitcom to end."

Matthews did predict Mitt Romney will be John McCain's running mate and Pennsylvania gov Ed Rendell, a big-time Hillary Clinton supporter, will be on Obama's ticket because the Democrats need to win the Keystone State.

Stay tuned.

— Alan Brody