



MATT SILVERMAN

PRESIDENT



Commissioner Bud Selig had this to say last fall when asked about the Tampa Bay Rays after the team had clinched its second American League East championship: "It is a great franchise; they have done a marvelous job. They have run it beautifully."

That praise, echoed by many others in Major League Baseball, is due in no small part to Rays President Matt Silverman.

One of the youngest team presidents in the history of the game, 34-year-old Matt Silverman is in his sixth year of overseeing the day-to-day operations of the Rays, widely recognized as one of professional sports' best success stories.

Under his direction, the revitalized Rays continue to develop fresh ideas with an emphasis on customer service to keep Tropicana Field fan-friendly and fun. ESPN selected the Rays as having the most affordable fan experience among the 122 MLB, NFL, NBA and NHL franchises in 2009 and ranked them sixth in 2010.

After nine last-place finishes in their first 10 seasons, the Rays 277 wins the past three seasons are fourth most in the majors. Under Silverman, the Rays have combined a winning, exciting product on the field with a creative promotional strategy to sell out 34 home games in the past five seasons. In the eight previous years, the Rays sold out only three games. Last season, in another unique offering to the community, the team gave away free tickets to the first 20,000 fans attending the Rays-Orioles game on September 29, the day after they clinched a berth in the postseason.

Off the field, major capital improvements to Tropicana Field and a refreshed commitment to improving staff preparation and training has greatly enhanced the Rays game-day experience. The team's rebranding efforts prior to the 2008 season included a new team name, colors and uniforms and produced the major leagues' largest increase in retail sales.

Meanwhile, the team's charitable work through the Rays Baseball Foundation has invested more than \$1.7 million into the Tampa Bay region over the past three years and brought the team and the community even closer together.

The organization's objective to expand its reach and become a regional standard bearer is

being realized. In 2010, the Rays local television ratings rose to fifth highest in all of baseball. And in 2011, the FOX network has tabbed the Rays for eight national or regional telecasts.

To build this regional presence, Silverman decided early on to do things a little differently. In 2007 and 2008, he relocated a series of regular-season games to the Disney Sports Complex in Orlando, expanding the team's reach across Central Florida. In 2009, the team opened its first spring training camp at Charlotte Sports Park, a state-of-the-art facility that has drawn glowing reviews and given the Rays a year-round presence in the southern part of its region along Florida's Gulf Coast. In their first two seasons in Charlotte County, the Rays have played before 90 percent capacity in 31 home games.

Silverman also serves as the president of the Sunburst Entertainment Group, a wholly owned subsidiary of the Rays, which serves as a vehicle to attract events to Tropicana Field. Sunburst provides consulting services to industry partners and enables the Rays organization to make investments in other sports and entertainment-related business opportunities.

Prior to joining the Rays, Silverman worked closely with Principal Owner Stuart Sternberg at Goldman Sachs and orchestrated Sternberg's purchase of controlling interest in the franchise. The partnership and friendship that first developed on Wall Street has now found its way to Tampa Bay and directed the Rays triumphant last-place-to-World Series season in 2008.

In 2010 Silverman received the George M. Steinbrenner III Citizen of the Year award from the Sports Club of Tampa Bay. *Street & Smith's Sports Business Journal* named Silverman to its 2009 "Forty Under 40" list honoring accomplished and promising sports executives under age 40.

A lifelong baseball fan, Silverman also enjoys running and writing. The Dallas native holds a bachelor of economics degree from Harvard University. He is a member of the board of the Rays Baseball Foundation the Hillsborough Education Foundation, and Starting Right, Now. He also serves as chairman of the Tampa Bay Partnership's Council of Governors and is a member of the Florida Council of 100.