

Dear Mayor Welch and Ms. Chairwoman Figgs-Sanders,

I am writing to you today to share a major piece of my heart. I fell in love with sports through going to games in the Tampa Bay Area with my dad. We have a whole room of baseball memorabilia in the house in which I grew up. I'd like to think my dad loves his kids more than baseball, but it's a close call! After graduating from the University of Florida, I went on to work for MLB, ESPN, entrepreneur Gary V, the owner of the Miami Dolphins and eventually, started my sports marketing business right here in the Tampa Bay Area. I am one of the few female NFL Agents and a best-selling author. I moved back to this area, because I have such pride in being from Tampa Bay. I wanted my business to be headquartered here and thanks to the sports I was exposed to growing up here, I wanted my company to shine light on all that is possible because of our sports teams.

I want to share with you just a few of the ways the Rays have changed my life. That team is responsible for some of the greatest, most priceless memories I've been able to share with my dad. He is a cancer survivor, so I don't take any of those quality moments lightly. When I ran social media for Major League Baseball, I had the opportunity to meet Stu Sternberg at Spring Training. He gave me his personal email address and offered to help me throughout my career. What other owner in sports gives a stranger that kind of personal assistance?! But that is the Tampa Bay Area for you. It's like a big family here and everyone helps each other. Thanks in part to Stu, I didn't have to move to Atlanta or New York after graduating college, I could have a thriving life and business as a young person right here.

In my role as CEO of Social Victories, I have been fortunate enough to have the Rays as a client. I mainly work with the marketing, communications and community impact teams. I leave my meetings at the Trop on such a high. The people inside that building are the most special of any sports organization with which I've ever interacted. I want to scream from the rooftops how incredible they are. The Rays employees are the real deal. They have the biggest hearts, operate with the highest levels of integrity, generosity and authenticity and truly care about making the most positive difference in this community. I end every conversation with them saying that I am the lucky one. The Rays are a gem in this community and stand out in all of sports for being leaders. Those of us who are sports fans and work in this field would not have had nearly as happy lives, nor would our careers have been possible, without this phenomenal organization. We need to ensure our hearts remain full, as losing the Rays in any capacity would be like a death. I appreciate your time and please let me know any follow-up questions. Thank you for all you are doing to ensure our future generations have the same memories and opportunities that I did in Tampa Bay.

All the Best,
Whitney Holtzman