

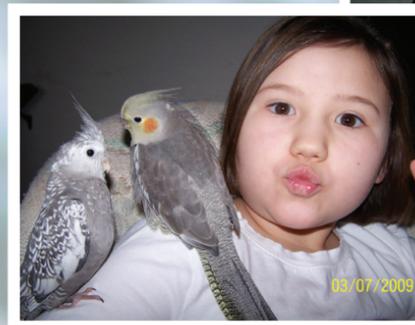
LEADING With *Passion*

Naomi Silver continues her father's legacy

By Susan Y. Dyer, Photos By Jillian Guyette

"Keeping the family together is the goal that rises above all other issues"

- NAOMI SILVER



The first thing that I learned about Naomi Silver, that wasn't on the web, is that she has two pet birds. When I called her to set up an interview it was difficult to hear her as there was so much background noise: chirping cockatiels. I laughed and asked, "Do any of your birds have red wings?" She answered with a chuckle, "No, Susan. But, I love them so much!" I later emailed her a story about my own great-great grandmother's parrot, Peter, who traveled with her and her family at sea, as her husband was a merchant ship captain. Peter was famous, I wrote Naomi, for regularly calling out "Man overboard." Naomi loved the story and soon I was listening to her tell me her own. She told me about her current life as the President, CEO and chief operating officer of the Rochester Red Wings minor league baseball team, as a wife and as a mother of two children: twelve year old Morrie and eight year old Desirée.

As I sat listening to this truly elegant woman, I thought to myself that she has a gift for making eye contact and with that the ability to make others feel significant: an excellent attribute for both a mother and a manager. Naomi's office walls are

decorated with images from these two important areas of her life. One of these is a large photograph of nine year old Naomi and her parents at the ballpark which was later named Silver Stadium, after her father, Morrie. When the St. Louis Cardinals decided to end its thirty-two year relationship with the Red Wings, Morrie Silver made it a one man mission to preserve baseball in Rochester. His efforts to do so included selling stock of the franchise to its fans. His campaign was successful and is now referred to as the "72 Day Miracle."

The black and white image was taken in 1968 on the night before the Silvers moved to Miami Beach, Florida. Naomi, an only child, is wearing a skirt covered with large polka dots. I couldn't help but see the dots as emblematic of the singular sphere that would later dominate her professional life: the baseball. The move to Florida was made to aide her father's health as he suffered from severe heart problems. Naomi and her mother, Anna, returned to Rochester shortly after her father's death when she was fifteen.

It was during this time that her mother joined the Red Wings Board of Directors,

eventually becoming its Chairman. She remained in this position until Naomi became a member of the Board, and Chief Operating Officer. Anna Silver served as a bridge between the past and the future: her husband and her daughter. Naomi explained with a slight smile, "My mother is a very, grounded person. She has a strong work ethic believing that one should never take the easy way. She was my anchor during that difficult time. She has lived with my family and me for the past 20 years. She makes it possible for my husband and me to both have full time careers. At 92, my mother still drives, shops and cooks."

When I asked Naomi what she did for relaxation, she answered, "This isn't a me time. It's not a time for relaxation. I traveled a lot when I was younger. I didn't really have a focus then. I wasn't thinking that someday I will do what I do now. Then, in the 80's, I started to become interested in the Red Wings as a business rather than a sport. That was when I knew I could make a difference. So, if I am not here at Frontier Field or at one of the not-for-profit groups I am involved with, I am home." That, she told me, includes yoga with her daughter and attending her son's baseball games."