

Congratulations Tram!

Undeniably, my colleagues at **Sigma** and I have spent the past several months with a heightened focus on navigating the treacherous equity markets. We have devoted ourselves exhaustively to divining the short and long-term direction of the general market, in an attempt to protect our clients' assets as well as to position them to profit from future advances. Needless to say, while this has been our focus, we are also cognizant of the fact that the world is broader than just financial matters. We wish to deviate in this month's **Sigma Summaries** to a topic that interests many of us here, and may hold an interest for many friends of the firm.

By way of introduction, I would state emphatically that over the years I have not hidden the fact that I am a sports junkie. I have a particular fondness for baseball and continue to "try" to play hardball in a 40 and over baseball league in the summer and can often be found in Lakeland, Florida in January playing in the Detroit Tigers Fantasy Camp.

Clearly, being located in Southeast Michigan has made me, and legions of others, susceptible to the normal forces that affect our towns and cities. As time allows, I also follow as many of our other local professional sports teams and of course, take great pride with the recent crowning of our Detroit Red Wings hockey team as Stanley Cup Champions. I also share in the disappointment that our other major sport teams have not had nearly the level of success for quite some time. In a success-starved sports community such as this, the achievement was particularly well appreciated.

Like many in the Detroit area, we are cautiously optimistic that the fortunes of one of the Detroit teams may be about to change. Last week, the Detroit Tiger's management named as their new manager former Tiger all-star shortstop Alan Trammell. "Tram", as he is affectionately referred to by many Detroiters, also happens to be a long time client of **Sigma**. Therefore, we feel a special affinity at his appointment. We are

particularly hopeful that his success as a manager will parallel the success he enjoyed as a player for almost twenty years with the Tigers.

Aside from his on-field prowess, we would like to bring to light the characteristics that we have observed off the field that we think might lead to his success in his new role. While much of what we offer is recollected by our colleague, and former Tram teammate Dave Bergman, I can also offer some first hand observations given my personal experiences with Tram over a several year period as I attended spring training sessions.

First, Tram is known in the community as an individual with incredible class and dignity. Unlike many larger-than-life athletes whose off-field exploits dominate the human interest sections of the newspaper, Tram was the type of athlete to whom you could point your children as the consummate professional and role model. He worked hard, seldom complained, and rarely spoke of his many

achievements. He is a balanced individual, with a sense of devotion to his family, team and community. These are critical leadership factors.

There is no question that Tram is clearly an authority on the subject of baseball. Be it baseball strategy, mechanics of hitting, fielding, or any number of related topics, Tram is a master at the game. On the other hand, Tram is unabashed in acknowledging where his limitations are and seeking outside assistance from qualified experts in areas that are not yet his strength.

For example, as a **Sigma** client, Tram has shown to be

both inquisitive as well as genuinely interested in seeking knowledge in the area of investment and financial planning. He is not afraid to ask questions yet he is also a great listener. I have observed humility within Tram that puts one at ease, a trait that is so often lost by those who have achieved great success within their career.

I would also suggest that Tram is likable, affable and approachable. In fact, I never saw him turn away an autograph seeker. Tram also has great instincts, a trait that is invaluable to a player as well as to a coach. Tram can also be intense and highly competitive. But

grandstanding and “in-your-face” behavior is not his style. Success is shared with the team. And finally, I recall that Tram is an optimist, seeing the glass as half full, not half empty.

Clearly, no one knows whether Alan Trammel will be successful in turning around the Detroit Tigers. What I do know, however, is that Tram is a “class act” with many fine qualities as a person, client, player and coach. These traits should serve him well as the new skipper of the Tigers. We wish him much success and are proud of our association!

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As you are well aware, trees are needlessly destroyed every year to provide various paper products for our consumption. As a result, much of this paper is wasted. We at Sigma are interested in doing our part to preserve and protect our natural resources. Therefore we will be offering our monthly newsletter “Sigma Summaries” electronically to those of our clients and friends who are interested in receiving it this way. Please provide us with your e-mail address by calling the office at 248-223-0122 or by e-mailing us at sbilkie@sigmainvestments.com . Thank you for your consideration.

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