

AGE: 40 (turned 40 on March 7)

TITLES: Partner and vice chair, sports industry team

COMPANY: Foley & Lardner LLP

EDUCATION: B.B.A., University of Miami, 1992; J.D., Washington University in St. Louis, 1995

FAMILY: Single

CAREER: Started in Department of Housing and Urban Development legal honors program in 1995; associate counsel, White House Office of Counsel to the President; special assistant, office of the general counsel at HUD; assistant counsel in Office of the Vice President; in-house counsel to Gore 2000 and Gore/Lieberman; joined Foley & Lardner in October 2001

LAST VACATION: Israel

WHAT'S ON YOUR IPOD? Eclectic mix including Springsteen, U2, Beatles, Black Eyed Peas, Nirvana, Dave Matthews and random pop

GUILTY PLEASURE: Late-night TV — pretty much anything

BEST STRESS RELEASE: Working out

PET PEEVE: Dishonesty and disloyalty

GREATEST DISAPPOINTMENT: Don't have one. One door closes, another opens.

FANTASY JOB: Senior executive for a team or league

BUSINESS ADVICE: Remain open-minded and try to work on things you enjoy and believe in.

IRWIN RAIJ

Foley & Lardner LLP

There are stadium and franchise deals. And then there is the series of seemingly impossible situations Irwin Raji has been in during the past decade.

After playing a key role in the relocation of the Montreal Expos in 2004 to Washington, D.C., and the construction of Nationals Park, the Foley & Lardner attorney then worked on the forthcoming Florida Marlins ballpark on behalf of Major League Baseball, represented Chuck Greenberg, Nolan Ryan and their partners last year in their purchase of the Texas Rangers, and now is part of MLB Commissioner Bud Selig's task force studying new stadium options for the Oakland A's.

Each of these sagas were anything but conventional and at many times came perilously close to falling apart entirely. But baseball is now solidly in place in the nation's capital, the Marlins' ballpark will open next year, and the Rangers are rapidly ascending under Ryan and his team following a bankruptcy filing and high-stakes auction for the team.

And while public details are scarce regarding the A's study, Raji hopes for a suc-

cessful outcome there, too, in the coming months.

"There's never any one way to do these deals. Every one is very, very different," Raji said. "The landscape to do a stadium deal nowadays is incredibly challenging. But I still do have hope, always, and I'm still bullish on these deals. The key is finding what's really important to each side."

Raji has been widely praised by MLB and many individual teams for a cool, methodical approach to these highly complex situations. But the Miami native admits to some emotion, particularly with regard to the new Marlins stadium, being built on the site of the former Orange Bowl in Miami's Little Havana.

"I spent a lot of time at the Orange Bowl as a kid, and have a ton of memories there. I loved it there," said Raji, also student body president while at the University of Miami, which also called the Orange Bowl home. "So it was very, very strange to be part of the process of essentially tearing it down."



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