



# NEWS RELEASE

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**For Immediate Release**  
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## **Dan Lunetta Named Sheldon "Chief" Bender Award Winner**

**ST. PETERSBURG, Fla.** — Minor League Baseball announced today that it has selected Detroit Tigers Director of Minor League Operations Dan Lunetta as the recipient of the ninth annual Sheldon "Chief" Bender Award, presented to an individual with distinguished service who has been instrumental in player development. The award honors Bender as a long time front office executive and consultant who spent 39 years with the Cincinnati Reds. Lunetta will receive his award at the Baseball Winter Meetings Banquet on Sunday, Dec. 4, at Gaylord National Resort & Convention Center in National Harbor, Maryland.

"I am deeply honored to be this year's recipient of the Chief Bender Award," said Lunetta. "This could not have happened without the benefit of working with the many people I have over the years, including Chief Bender himself, a man for whom I have the utmost respect and admiration. I had the great fortune to work with Chief in 1989 while with the Reds organization, and it is a tremendous honor to join those who have preceded me in winning this award."

"Dan Lunetta is one of the most well-rounded and experienced executives in baseball today," said Minor League Baseball President & CEO Pat O'Conner. "Dan's dedication to player development and his contributions to the game at the Major League level and the Minor League level throughout his career have been extraordinary, and it is my pleasure to present him with the Sheldon "Chief" Bender Award."

Prior to joining the Tigers in 2004, Lunetta served as a Special Assistant to the General Manager for the Montreal Expos for two seasons (2002-03). Lunetta spent 10 years with the Florida Marlins organization, beginning as the Director of Minor League Administration in 1991 before being promoted to Director of Major League Administration in 1998. Lunetta began his baseball career in 1980 as the general manager of Single-A Jamestown in the New York-Penn League and later spent time in Triple-A with Buffalo and Rochester.

In his current role as the Director of Minor League Operations for the Detroit Tigers, he oversees the day-to-day player development business/administrative operations of the minor league system, which includes the Tigers' six U.S.-based minor league affiliates. He is responsible for maintaining rules compliance and oversees the Tigers' baseball operations budget. Additionally, he supervises the Florida baseball operations at TigerTown in Lakeland, which includes Spring Training, extended Spring Training, the Gulf Coast League and the Tigers' Instructional League camp.

Lunetta, 60, his wife, Jhoanna, and sons Anthony Robert, 20, and Samuel Joseph, 15, reside in Lakeland, Florida. A native of Jamestown, New York, Lunetta is a graduate of State University of New York at Brockport. He was inducted into the Chautauqua County (NY) Sports Hall of Fame in 2014.

### **PREVIOUS SHELDON "CHIEF" BENDER AWARD WINNERS**

2008	Jim Rantz, Minnesota Twins	2012	Mitch Lukevics, Tampa Bay Rays
2009	Keith Lieppman, Oakland Athletics	2013	Brian Graham, Baltimore Orioles
2010	Mark Newman, New York Yankees	2014	Lois Hudson, Cincinnati Reds
2011	Bob Gebhard, Arizona Diamondbacks	2015	Buddy Bell, Chicago White Sox

### **About Minor League Baseball**

Minor League Baseball, headquartered in St. Petersburg, Florida, is the governing body for all professional baseball teams in the United States, Canada, and the Dominican Republic that are affiliated with Major League

Baseball® clubs through their farm systems. Fans are coming out in unprecedented numbers to this one-of-a-kind experience that can only be found at Minor League Baseball ballparks. In 2016, Minor League Baseball attracted 41.3 million fans to its ballparks to see the future stars of the sport hone their skills. From the electricity in the stands to the excitement on the field, Minor League Baseball has provided affordable family-friendly entertainment to people of all ages since its founding in 1901. For more information, visit [www.MiLB.com](http://www.MiLB.com).

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