

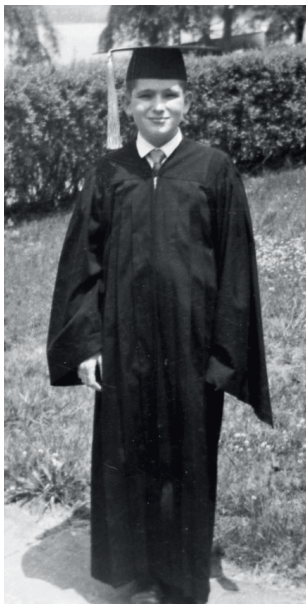


TOP ROW: The Baiada family with Mark, the oldest of the six sons, standing between his parents.

Mark at his eighth grade graduation. He is a graduate of Holy Cross High School in Delran, New Jersey.

BOTTOM ROW: Mark took seriously the Boy Scout values of trustworthiness and good citizenship.

Mark holding his brother Mel, circa 1959.



Mark took all of his early life lessons to heart. Asked to boil them down into two words, he doesn't hesitate: "Family first."

Surrounded by entrepreneurship through his parents' small insurance agency in rural Burlington County, New Jersey, as well as several of his relatives' small businesses, Mark absorbed their example. He knew from a young age that he wanted to own his own business, despite the long hours and hard work he witnessed daily.

"Work's no problem. I like to work," Mark says. While in Catholic school, he embraced the challenge of selling Christmas cards door to door. With a partner, he raised the most money for his school and earned the top prize.

While a solid work ethic was something he learned from his family, Mark's Catholic school education influenced him as well. Religion and values were very important to Mark. From a young age he even thought a lot about becoming a priest, until, as he says jokingly, "I discovered girls."

Hard work has always been part of being a Baiada. Mark and his brothers worked together to accomplish projects that often involved physical labor, developing close bonds and sharing laughs along the way. One of his grandmom's roles was to act as the taskmaster who kept the young workers on track. "We would egg her on and say that one of my brothers stopped working, even if he didn't. If anybody 'stopped,' she would be all over him," Mark remembers with a smile.

One family project had particular significance: In the early 1960s, Mark's parents decided that the family's home in Delanco needed a sea wall. It wasn't an idle notion, as the