

“The founder is very important in building the brand. Mark laid down the core values even before the company opened.”

MEL BAIADA, Mark's brother and a BAYADA Board Director

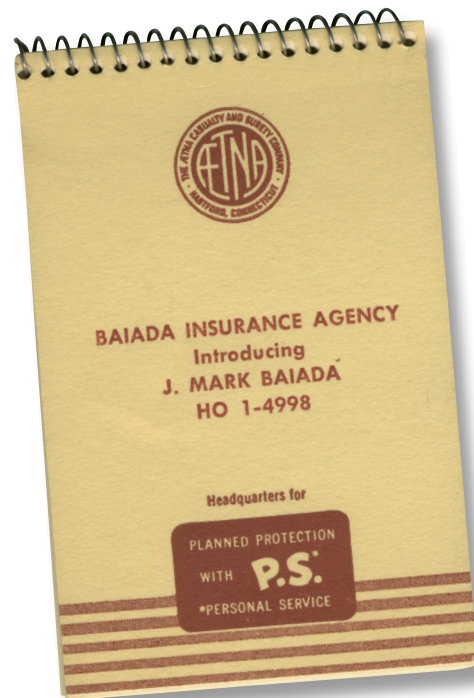
father's company, Baiada Insurance Agency. He finished at Rutgers in New Brunswick with a BA in 1969, becoming one of his family's first college graduates, and earned an MBA at Rutgers, Newark in 1970. After graduation, Mark worked as a market researcher at the American Thread Company in Stamford, Connecticut, and then at Avon Products in New York City. While he did very well, his corporate success was a means to an end—the goal of owning his own business. He voraciously read business books, articles, and annual reports. He admired the success and wisdom of Benjamin Franklin, Andrew Carnegie, and IBM founder Thomas Watson. To learn more about managing groups and activities, he led a Cub Scout pack. And on Wednesdays and Sundays, Mark

studied the business opportunities advertisements in *The New York Times* in search of a good fit.

He had clear criteria for the business selection. First, the business had to help people and make a difference in their lives. Second, it had to meet a growing need and be something to which he could devote his life's work. Third, it should be reproducible and expandable from coast to coast. Fourth and most immediately, he had to be able to start it on his savings of \$16,000.

With these factors in mind, Mark decided to research one new business per month. First, he considered early childhood education as a meaningful possibility. It had potential, especially because more mothers of young children were working outside the home. But Mark did not feel equipped to shape and mold young children's minds, as he did not have a background in education. Then, after seeing a billboard for an auto painting chain seeking franchises, Mark briefly diverted from his criteria and explored that idea by repainting the beat-up old Volkswagen Bug at his parents' house. Curiously, he chose a shade much like today's "BAYADA red." However, he quickly realized that this would not be a fulfilling option.

Next, Mark thought about starting a nursing home. His father's cousin Josephine Healey—affectionately known as Little Jo—had previously worked at one, so he visited her to learn more about it. It was a fortuitous encounter, as she now happened to be working as a live-in home health aide for a local home health care agency. That kind of work interested him far more than nursing homes did. Perhaps it was because an image close to his heart—his



LEFT TO RIGHT: Mark worked part-time at the family insurance agency during college.

