



ABOVE: Mark's mom Anne moved into Mark's household after her husband's passing. She continued to live with the family after Mark and Ann's marriage, with help from BAYADA Home Health Aides, including her beloved Connie.

Blending the families

In August 1991, Ann and her girls moved into a new house in Moorestown with the Baiadas. As happy as the blended family was, they all felt some stress. Ann's parents and close friends in Pennsylvania—her long-treasured support system—weren't right around the corner anymore. The girls had to start at a new school. Moorestown Friends School is a congenial place, and David and Janice were very happy there, but still it wasn't easy. Jackie and Kelli were teenagers and had left behind a solid group of established friends. At home, David and Janice weren't used to having a new mother's influence, more people in the house, and new rules to follow. Mark's parental style had been a little more casual than Ann's.

Mark's mom Anne, called Grandmom, still lived with them, too. "It's difficult to have a person with a disability live with you for years and years," her daughter-in-law Ann says. "And home health aides can feel very intrusive to a family. To have a new marriage, raise five kids, and also have a parent with a disability living with us—it was tough. So I thoroughly understand the situation home care families are in."

At the same time, as Ann readily adds, "Grandmom brought love and levity to the family. She was a kind person with a great sense of humor who wouldn't hesitate to laugh at herself. She never wanted to appear a burden." The family included her in every outing. And although she had limited speech, she found ways to tease Mark and offer her opinions. As she tuned into the new dynamics of the household, she would often pipe up with "Mark, Ann is right! Ann is right!"

"I remember thinking, 'Great! Thanks, Mom. Now all the women are ganging up on me,'" Mark says, with affection.

While the blending of the families included a few rough patches, the family got through them with patience and understanding. They became a close, cohesive unit, not least because Mark and Ann insisted on eating a family dinner together every night.

"No matter how much work they had to do and how busy life got, we religiously ate dinner together every single night. I'm not exaggerating. Every single night. When the last person came home, that's when we ate," says Jackie. "Sometimes Mark headed back to work, and Mom did paperwork late into the night, but it was important to them we were together for dinner." The ritual was not lost on the children, who continue it with their own families.

Goals and challenges of the 1990s

The early 1990s brought business transformations as well as personal ones. The company had expanded to 22 service offices and two support offices (accounting and data processing). Although BAYADA hadn't quite reached Hollywood, it had moved well beyond Philadelphia and southern New Jersey to make significant inroads in Wilmington, Delaware; Winston-Salem, North Carolina; and Tampa, Florida—all areas in which its name wasn't known at first.

Ginny Gotides, a retired Division Director who was instrumental in building the Delaware business, describes the typical situation. "In the beginning, we had a meeting with a Wilmington hospital that had its own home care