I believe in the American Dream. I believe that hard work and self-reliance can take you further than you ever dreamed you could go. And I believe in all of this because of my parents. Between the two of them, my parents had nine years of education – my Dad never smoked. He knew back then, but I think my parents used twice the energy to spend a dollar as they did to earn it. But life was good because we knew we were loved. Dinner was at 5:30 sharp with a table filled with homemade, and sometimes homemade meals. And it was a table filled with people because dinnertime meant family time. My parents would share things about life that made me think about my future. I knew that this was their American Dream. I knew they had started life with nothing and had raised their six kids by the sweat of their brow. I knew only one thing for sure – that life is not easy and you need to be ready to meet it head on. That, at the end of the day, I would be responsible for who I became and what I did with my life. Not a day goes by that I don’t think of my parents. I smile when I remember my Dad telling us that the Constitution doesn’t guarantee us happiness; it only guarantees the right to pursue our happiness. Whether you make cigars for a living, or sew buttonholes for designer suits, the American Dream is there. Dream it, work at it, and make it a reality. My parents instilled a love of the seashore in my siblings and me and saved what money they could over many years in order to buy what my Dad lovingly called ‘Our Little Shack’ in North Wildwood. Of course they bought it just in time for the Storm of ’62, but God smiled on us and our house survived!