

## DEDICATED TO

**Shahla Al-Kli**

The cover of this edition of *Insights* depicts the Kurdistan flag waving high within the walls of one of the most ancient citadels in the world. The flag is emblazoned with a bright sun in the center, a symbol of eternal light and inspiration to the Kurdish people. For us, the members of this year's research trip to Iraqi Kurdistan, the sun might as well be replaced with a shining light personified by our group's guide and mentor, Shahla Al-Kli.

Without Shahla's steadfast dedication to her mission of breathing new life to Iraqi Kurdistan and its people, this trip would have never taken place. Without her tireless planning and meticulous organizational skills, we would have surely stumbled into Kurdistan deaf, blind and mute. And without her uncompromising instinct for hosting guests in a manner truly reflecting famed and fabled Kurdish generosity, we would have never had the chance to see, taste and revel in all that Kurdistan has to offer.

We are forever grateful to you, Shahla, our gateway to Kurdistan, and we dedicate this journal to you.