

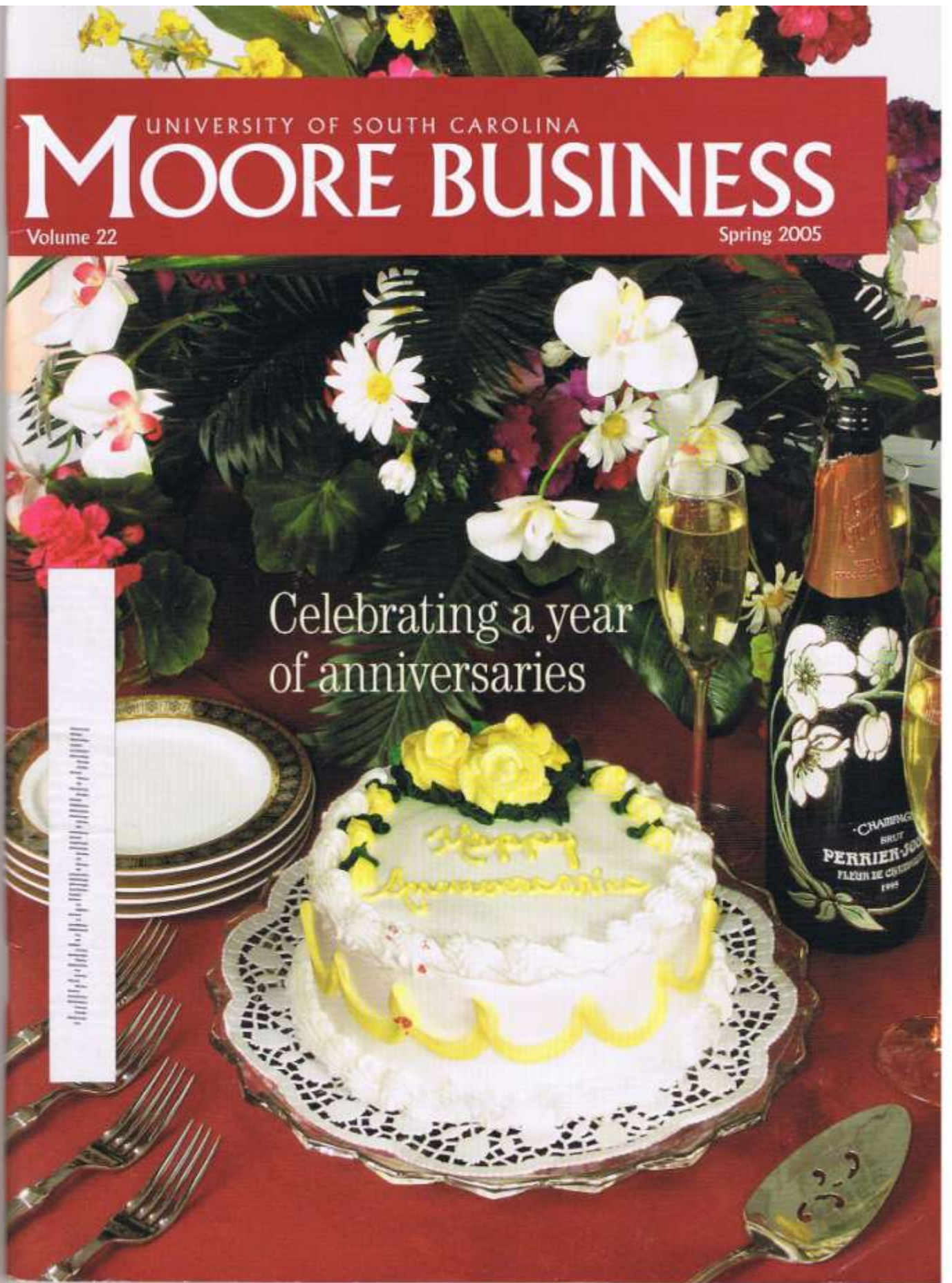
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA
MOORE BUSINESS

Volume 22

Spring 2005

Celebrating a year
of anniversaries

MOORE BUSINESS





Conveying the “True Spirit” of Islam

Mukhtar Muhammad was at his Jacksonville, Florida, office that day in September 2001, preparing shipments of his new book on Islamic leadership, when he received a phone call from his wife. A plane had just crashed into the World Trade Center in New York, she said.

In the nearly four years since 9/11, Muhammad (BS '88) has become a voice for Islam, working, he says, to correct “negative stereotypes and misconceptions” about his religion and about Muslims.

To that end, the 42-year-old Muhammad, a third-generation African-American Muslim, participates in interfaith discussions, conducts workshops, and publishes articles about strategic leadership and management issues facing Islamic institutions. And last fall, his publishing and printing company launched the first line of Islamic greeting cards designed for the broader American public.

The cards, designed to celebrate Islam’s holy month of Ramadan, “convey the true spirit of Islam and address the key issues that Americans want to know about Islam,” according to Muhammad. They include themes like the oneness of humanity, respect for diversity, and the importance of interfaith relations. Muslims are encouraged to send the greeting cards to family, friends, neighbors, faith-based organizations, elected officials, and the media.

Response to the cards, says Muhammad, has been overwhelmingly positive. “Our sales approached \$25,000 in just the last quarter of 2004. We’ve even had Christians buy the cards and give them to their Muslim friends.” (One of the cards, a special interfaith card called “Greetings of Peace,” features a photo of Pope John Paul II, Cardinal William Keeler of Baltimore, and Imam Dr. W. Deen Mohammed.)

A native of New Jersey and a former U.S. Naval officer, Muhammad is vice-president of sales and marketing for FAMACO Publishers, the privately held printing, publishing, and consulting company that he formed in 1996. His wife, Darlene Miller Muhammad (BS '92), an analyst for Merrill Lynch in Jacksonville, is president of FAMACO Publishers. The couple met while both were students at the Moore School.

The recipient of numerous academic, civic, and professional achievement awards, including General Dynamics’ Outstanding Achievement Award and Navy Achievement Medals, Mukhtar Muhammad was part of a U.S. State Department initiative in February 2004 to meet with provincial governors and other leaders from Afghanistan. Muhammad addressed the visitors about democracy, diversity, and Islam in America.

“What we’re trying to get across,” Muhammad says, is that “what happened on 9/11 and what we see happening in certain parts of the world is not representative of Islam.” The “greatest source of damage to the image of Islam,” he writes, “has been the failure of the global Muslim leadership to speak out unequivocally against wrong, even if it be against those who call themselves Muslim.”

His company’s Islamic greetings cards, he adds, are a “practical way of expressing compassion and, hopefully, encouraging dialogue. [Marketing the cards] is not just a business, it’s a vocation.”

—Jan Collins



Muhammad