

# Congratulations to the 2022-2023 Omar K. Carrion Scholarship Recipients of the Asian Studies Program in the Green School of International & Public Affairs

*The Omar K. Carrion Scholarship for Asian Studies was established through a generous gift made by Hilda and Fernando Carrion, parents of Omar, as an endowment memorializing their son who passed away in 2013. This year we are awarding three outstanding students in our program.*

*Recipients of the  
Omar K. Carrion Scholarship*

## URI RODRIGUEZ

AWARD WINNER

As a 4.0 GPA student pursuing the Chinese Area Studies track of the Asian Studies BA degree, Uri's curiosity for Asian cultures was always present, but it truly transformed into an academic interest after traveling to China for a year. Even though the pandemic forced students to return earlier, Uri continued to study Chinese with a personal online tutor, developing a desire to pursue a degree in Chinese language and culture at FIU. As time went by, Uri not only became the President of the FIU Chinese Salon but also enrolled in Jiangsu Normal University's Language Summer Camp in China. Uri is also an English tutor to Tsinghua University students which further allows them to gain first-hand experiences in Chinese culture and language. In the future, Uri intends on continuing language studies at Tsinghua University or pursuing an MA degree in the U.S. in a related field of study.

## RACHEL CARAZO

RUNNER-UP

Rachel received undergraduate degrees in History and English from Southeastern Louisiana University. She continued her studies in Asia through FIU's undergraduate Asian Studies BA online degree with a 4.0 GPA. Rachel also works as an academic tutor for students in topics such as social studies, ESL, and language and literature. Rachel is currently editing a scholarly collection celebrating the twentieth anniversary of Ridley Scott's *Gladiator*, which is set to be published by the end of 2022. Even though she has never traveled to Asia, Rachel hopes to soon, especially since she has also taken four online classes on Asian topics – such as *yōkai*, film, and pop culture – at Kansai Gaidai University (Japan), where she has made friends with people from around the world.

2022-  
2023



# OMAR KAHIL CARRION SCHOLARSHIP

## *History of the Award*



FIU and Asian Studies Program alumnus Omar Kahil Carrion passed away on March 2, 2013, after he was the victim of a fatal car accident. Omar was a very bright and vibrant young man who majored in Asian Studies with a concentration in Japanese Studies. Omar was born January 28, 1985 in Miami, FL. He grew up in a tight-knit family with his mother, Hilda, father, Fernando, and his younger sister, Tatiana. He was a family guy, and had a great relationship with his parents, sister and extended family. He was always a happy child. His favorite hobbies were playing video games and playing outside with friends, especially baseball. His friends called him the “Number One Marlin’s Fan.”

Omar graduated high school in 2003 and immediately started classes at FIU. He grew a love for Japan and pursued his bachelor’s in Asian Studies. He gained new friends and experiences, like teaching English to students in Japan. In the summer of 2005, Omar participated in a study abroad program to Ritsumeikan University in Kyoto.

He eventually graduated in 2007 and taught English to children in Kitakyūshū, Japan for a short time. Once he arrived back in Miami, he was hired by J. Silny and Associates as a Foreign Credential Advisor and degree evaluator, where he worked for five years. He was thankful for his career but longed for something that he was always passionate about: filmmaking. As a result, he decided to pursue his passion in filmmaking and started the production company “Phyxius Pictures” with two friends. While filming with Phyxius Pictures, he wrote, directed, and edited a few short films and an episode. Omar was loved and cherished by his family, friends and co-workers. Those who were blessed to have known him will always remember him for his wonderful smile and his boisterous laugh, as well as his love for films and Japan.

Unfortunately, his dream was short lived. On March 2, 2013, Omar, who was on his way to play baseball with friends at Tropical Park, was hit by a drunk/drugged driver. He was killed instantly. His family misses him every day, and as a way of honoring their son, the Carrion family has given a donation to FIU to provide a scholarship that will inspire others to pursue their dreams no matter the obstacles. Asian Studies alumna, Gabriela Romeu Izaguirre, who knew Omar for eight years and regarded him as a brother, dedicated her M.A. thesis, “The Japanese History Textbook Controversy Amid Post-War Sino-Japanese Relation,” to his memory: “I dedicate this work to my friend, Omar Carrion, who sadly and tragically left this world before I finished. I hope that your passion for Japan can live through me as you watch from the other side.”