The Omar K. Carrion Scholarship for Asian Studies was established through a generous gift made by Hilda and Fernando Carrion, parents of Omar Carrion, as an endowment memorializing their son who passed away in 2013. This year we are awarding one main winner and two runners-up.

**SOFIYA BURMISTROVA**

*The main recipient of the 2018-2019 Omar K. Carrion Scholarship*

Sofiya Burmistrova is an undergraduate Asian Studies major with a concentration in East Asian Studies and has taken courses on East Asian language, culture, politics, and history. In Spring 2018, she participated in a five-month exchange program in Japan. Being immersed in the culture gave her a new perspective and appreciation for Japan. Studying abroad strengthened her Japanese language skills, allowed her to develop international friendships, and contributed to her personal development.

**HEDDA STOKKLAND**

*2018-2019 Runner-up*

Hedda Stokkland is an undergraduate major in Asian Studies. She completed a study abroad trip to Ritsumeikan University and is very committed to studying Japanese language and culture.

**ADRIANA SCHIAVO**

*2018-2019 Runner-up*

Adriana Schiavo is an undergraduate student majoring in Asian Studies. She has taken classes on Japanese history, literature, composition, language and conversation. In 2017, she traveled to Japan for the Ritsumeikan Summer Japanese Program in Kyoto, Japan, where she participated in excursions that ranged from hearing Taiko to meeting Geiko and Maiko. Currently, she is continuing her Japanese studies through self-study and plans to apply for the JET Programme, this year.
OMAR KAHIL CARRION SCHOLARSHIP

History of the Award

FIU and Asian Studies Program alumnus Omar Kahil Carrion, 30, 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 Graduate student, Gabriela Romeu, 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.”