



The Francisco Foundation Scholarship

One of Freedom's Heroes

Rogelio González Corzo, who is better known by his underground name, “Francisco”, was the leader in Cuba of the anti-Castro “Movement Recover the Revolution” (MRR, Movimiento de Recuperación Revolucionaria). He was a devout Catholic and selfless, courageous fighter for democracy, individual rights and the rule of law. González Corzo is widely regarded as the outstanding leader of the internal resistance to Castro’s tyranny.

The Communist dictatorship executed “Francisco” in 1961. González Corzo was 28 years old at that time.

Born in Havana, “Francisco” was a brilliant student who earned a degree in Agricultural Engineering. After graduating he went to work for a fertilizer company as an expert in soil conservation. During that period he joined a group fighting to overthrow dictator Fulgencio Batista.

In 1959, following the triumph of the insurrection to bring down Batista, and before Fidel Castro’s regime had fully revealed its totalitarian nature, “Francisco” worked briefly in the new government’s Ministry of Agriculture.

However, “Francisco” soon realized that Castro and his allies were imposing a Communist dictatorship backed by the Soviet Union, and that Castro’s regime would not tolerate opposition, having closed off all avenues to change. As a result, he became one of the founding members of the “Rural Commandos”, a group of volunteers devoted to organizing resistance among impoverished peasants in the mountains. Then, in 1959, under the leadership of Manuel Artime, González Corzo joined other young professionals, students, peasants and disillusioned members of the armed forces, and set out to organize a clandestine opposition group, the MRR. “Francisco’s” abilities, his charisma, valor, quick wit, sense of humor, modesty and readiness to assume the most dangerous risks made him the movement’s natural leader. The MRR’S objective was the overthrow of Castro’s dictatorship and the establishment in Cuba of the free democracy for which González Corzo had struggled in his efforts to bring down Batista.

Throughout 1960, large waves of Cubans fled into exile as the Castro regime arrested and executed thousands of people. That year, while anti-Castro exiles began training in preparation for the Bay of Pigs invasion, the MRR grew under “Francisco’s” leadership. With the assistance of Carlos Rodríguez Santana, he recruited members in every important Cuban town, organizing and supporting the growing number of anti-Castro guerrillas, and coordinating its activities with other resistance groups.

In a secret meeting held on July 6, 1960, “Francisco” was elected national coordinator of the Democratic Revolutionary Front, a coalition of the main underground resistance groups. González Corzo’s election was a clear recognition of his stature as a leader who was trusted and respected by the anti-Castro movement in Cuba. But as the resistance grew, Castro’s repressive forces stepped up arrests, psychological torture, massive searches, widespread use of informants, intense surveillance, and other tactics taught by the Cuban secret police’s advisors from the Soviet Union and other communist countries. At the same time, the regime mobilized thousands of soldiers to crush the anti-Castro guerrillas in the Escambray Mountains which “Francisco” had helped organize.

The regime’s crackdown against opponents intensified in 1961. Between March and April of 1961, the dictatorship’s organs of repression arrested over 50,000 Cubans. Then, on March 18, government forces apprehended “Francisco” during a raid on a house where the resistance leader was meeting with other members of the underground. Two days after the failed Bay of Pigs invasion, on April 19, 1961, Rogelio González Corzo was brought before a military tribunal, tried, convicted and condemned to death. On April 20, 1961, “Francisco” was executed by a firing squad along with six other resistance leaders.

Who is Eligible / How to Apply

The Francisco Foundation established the “Francisco” scholarships for full-time, degree seeking Miami Dade College students in honor and recognition of Rogelio González Corzo’s life and sacrifice on behalf of freedom and democracy. In addition, the Francisco Foundation has established modest scholarship endowments at the University of Miami., Florida International University and Florida Memorial University.

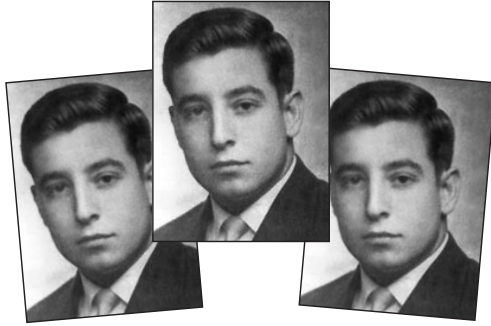
The award is based on academic achievement, leadership and service, and an individual essay. The recipient will receive a non-renewable, one year scholarship in the amount of \$2,500 which is to be used for tuition, books, and other expenses directly related to his or her studies.

All applicants must follow these guidelines:

- Submit a typed, doubled-spaced 1,100 word essay in English, Spanish or Creole which addresses the following two questions
 1. “What freedom and democracy mean to me”;
 2. In light of “Francisco’s” example, what sort of sacrifices should we be prepared to make in order to safeguard our freedoms and our democracy?
- Submit a copy of your most recent transcript.
- Submit a current copy of your Resume with examples of leadership, service, honors/awards listed (on campus and in the community).
- Letters of recommendation from two individuals who are in position to attest to your academic performance, citizenship and character.
- Deadline for submitting materials: December 3, 2009
- Submission should be sent to:

**P.O. Box 654714
Miami, Florida 33165**

The Francisco Scholarship Committee, which is made up of members and officers of the Francisco Foundation, will judge the entries. The winner will be announced on January 13, 2010.



Posthumous portrait of Rogelio González Corzo by Pedro Collado

*I will tell them
about your dream's life
so that we can dream it
in honor of your memory.
I will hear your voice
when I raise my own prayer
and I will be a witness to your suffering
so that I can write your History...*

“Francisco” from the book of poems
Marchas de Guerra y Cantos de Presidio
— By Manuel Artime

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e-mail: franciscofoundation@xsmail.com

*Liberty is generally established with
difficulty by remarkable individuals in the midst of
storms; it is perfected by education, sacrifice and civil
discord; and its benefits are not generally appreciated
until it is already old or one has lost it.*

Tocqueville

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