

Martyrs of February 24, 1996 Scholarship Application

DEADLINE: Monday, February 24, 2025

On February 24, 1996, two small airplanes on a search and rescue mission were shot down by two Cuban Air Force MiG airplanes. This premeditated action violated the right of civil aviation to fly over international waters, and violated the most basic right of these individuals, the right to life. Armando Alejandro was born in Cuba and came to live in the United States when he was 10; Carlos Costa was born in Miami and lived with his parents; Mario de la Pena, a 24-year-old born in New Jersey, lived at home; and Pablo Morales had left Cuba on a raft, searching for freedom.

The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), in its report of June 1996, concluded that the two planes were downed approximately 21-22 miles north of Cuba. ICAO concluded that the MiGs never tried to communicate with the civil aircraft and did not signal for them to land. They did not use warning shots, nor did they indicate that an attack was imminent but instead they shot missiles containing eight kilograms of high explosives that pulverized the aircraft so that there was no debris and no survivors. The shoot down was also condemned internationally by organizations such as the United Nations Commission of Human Rights and by its counterpart at the Organization of American States.

Former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, then United States ambassador to the United Nations, strongly condemned these murders at a special session of the United Nations Security Council. In gratitude for her support, a group of civic organizations in Miami sponsored a dinner in her honor. The proceeds from this event have been used to establish a scholarship fund at Miami-Dade College and administered by the College Hispanic Council. The families of these men have, over the years, contributed additional funds to increase the scholarship awards.

REQUIREMENTS: These scholarships are awarded to Miami Dade College students based on criteria, which includes academic achievement and leadership activities.

Eligible students must possess the following:

- *Completion of at least 12 credit hours toward an Associate in Arts, Associate in Science, or Certificate Program by the end of the Spring term*
 - *Submission of essay – see below*
 - ***Not Limited to Hispanic Students***
 - *Overall GPA of 3.00*
 - *Scholarship will partially cover tuition, fees, and other related educational materials*
 - *Scholarship is only available for students continuing their studies at Miami Dade College or transferring to a university. Previous recipients are **NOT** eligible to apply.*
- One scholarship will be awarded to an aviation-related major*
- *Recipients will be required to attend an Awards Ceremony.*
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ESSAY TOPIC: *The Struggle for Human Rights in Cuba – The July 11, 2021 protests and how the Cuban government responded (detentions and trials)*

Cuba has had many political changes during the past 30 years. They include the collapse of the Soviet Union, the illness and eventual death of Fidel Castro, the transition to Raul Castro and now Miguel Diaz-Canel as head of state.

This year's project is a **three page original essay** (750 words – 3 typed pages, double spaced, font of 10-12). The essay must include three bibliographic references (APA style). Please use your last and first names as the Essay's file name.

Use of Artificial Intelligence in the composition of the essay may disqualify the application.

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Interested students are asked to submit the following:

1. *Completed application below*
2. *Recent copy of Transcript or Degree Audit*
3. *Three (3) page essay, double spaced, font of 10-12 with at least **three** bibliographic references*

Name: _____ Date: ____/____/____

Student Number: _____ Phone Number _____

Local Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Email Address: _____

Academic Major _____ GPA _____

MDC Campus _____ Estimated graduation date from MDC: _____

Extracurricular Activities (clubs, organizations, hobbies, community involvement):

How did you learn about this scholarship: _____

**Application, Essay, and Transcript or Degree Audit, to be
uploaded and emailed to:**

scholarshipfeb24@yahoo.com

DEADLINE:

By Midnight on Monday, February 24, 2025

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