

Fathers prove age not barrier to seek university education

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By Amy Dangin

KOTA KINABALU: Although age was a bit of a concern when deciding to further their studies, two fathers took the plunge and successfully obtained their Bachelor's degree in Forestry Science with Class One Honours, after three years of study in Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS), on Saturday.

Rosli Siki, a 40-year-old father of two, was also the recipient of the Zainal Abidin Bador Award of the International Tropical Forestry.

Rosli, who was a forestry officer in the state before pursuing his Bachelor's degree, did not really give it much thought, until he had to represent his department to present a paperwork in Bangkok, Thailand, years ago.

"Having seen everyone else was at least a Bachelor's degree holder was a humbling experience and that was when I told myself that I need to and I could obtain more than just a diploma, and signed up for this course in 2009," he said.

Rosli's family had also been supportive of his decision, and had even encouraged his wife to further her studies and obtain a Master's degree in University Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM). She also received her scroll on Saturday.

He said that despite initially feeling a tad bit old for such a pursuit, as compared to the mostly 20-something-year-old students, he brushed the intimidation away and started taking active participation not only in class, but



Desmond Foo (left) and Ng Yuen Fern.

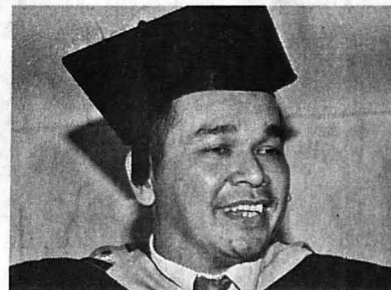
also in other co-curriculum and residential college activities.

For 40-year-old Desmond Foo, studying to obtain a Bachelor's degree in the past three years had proven to be more challenging than when he was studying for his Diploma in Forestry Science more than 15 years ago.

"Having have to complete assignments in the midst of fulfilling my responsibility as a husband and a father of a seven-year-old, had given me a different set of challenges.

"But the feeling at the end of the journey had proven to be worth all the difficulties," said Foo, adding that the past three years had even brought his family closer, as opposed to having to work outstation regularly before this, due to the call of duty.

Another Class One Honours graduate of the Forestry Science bachelor's degree, Ng Yuen Fern, 23, from Teluk Intan, Perak, has chosen Sabah to further her studies as she loves its natural



Rosli Siki

charms and wants to learn different cultures.

Ng, who will also be pursuing her Master's degree in UMS, shared that the most important thing to remember as a student is to have initiatives to look for information and not to depend on being spoon-fed.

"We cannot wait around for everything to be given to us and expect to excel. Plus, thanks to internet, our generation is so lucky to have free access to information, so there should be no excuse to not having resources," said Ng.