



Joanne (right) shows her graduation scroll to her mother Martha, watched by Jolene.

KOTA KINABALU: A pair of twins stole the limelight when they turned up fully dressed in the Kadazandusun traditional costume at the 16th Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) Convocation here yesterday.

Instead of donning conventional modern attire, Joanne and Jolene Joseph Madis chose to put on their “Koubasaran” wear to receive their Bachelor of Civil Engineering with Honours.

The daughters of the late Joseph Madis said they are proud to be Dusun Sumandak or young Dusun maidens.

“We decided to dress in our traditional attire because we take pride in our roots and we want to celebrate this special moment by promoting our Tambunan Dusun culture,” said the older sister Joanne.

The 23-year-old twins specially rented five traditional costumes – three for their older brothers and one each for them – to wear at their convocation ceremony.

“Our Koubasaran skirts are shorter than a sarong so we had to rent the Penampang Kadazandusun attire just to make sure we are safe to walk onto the stage,” Joanne explained while adding that the rest of her family had their own traditional attire.

Their mother, Martha Taliban, 64, was also dressed traditionally as requested by her two daughters.

“I am happy to witness my daughters’ achievements and as a single mother there is nothing more special than to see my two daughters succeed in their studies,” she said.

“When my daughter requested the family to wear the traditional attire, I



Mohd Zaim Abu Bakar achieved a first class honours degree in Sport Science

said why not? Our traditional attire is beautiful and we should be proud of it.

“Watching my two daughters walking onto that stage receiving their scrolls in the Koubasaran costume makes me happy and proud of my Dusun ethnicity,” said Martha.

The twins share a special bond as sisters and friends.

“It is a good thing to have a twin sister. Apart from having a study buddy, Joanne is a friend whom I can connect with when it comes to doing things that I love. Both of us are alike and I am grateful to have her in my life,” said Jolene.

When asked if that special bond meant they would even opt to seek

employment at the same workplace, they went silent for a moment until Joanne replied: “Whenever opportunity comes, we will definitely grab it.”

Meanwhile, Jolene admits it will be weird if her older sister is not around her. She recalled the longest separation they ever had was one week when Joanne went to Labuan for a short vacation.

They hope to secure employment at the Sabah Oil and Gas Terminal in Kimanis as engineers.

“It is our turn to repay and pamper our mother now,” said Jolene.

Meanwhile, after 15 convocation ceremonies, two UMS students majoring in Sport Science finally broke the faculty record by graduating with first class degrees.

Mohd Zaim Abu Bakar said there is no secret to his success.

“I just did what a student should do so and that is to give my best when doing my coursework and never do last-minute revision. And don’t rely so much on the examination’s score,” he said.

The 27-year-old Zaim who is from Brunei said he chose to pursue the programme in UMS because while he was on holiday here, he was attracted to the university.

Zaim is planning to pursue a Masters degree in the same programme in the United Kingdom, but only after he returns to Brunei to assist the government in developing the sport industry.

Another student who graduated with first class honours in the same programme is Christopher Pok. – By THERENES VOO

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