



Emy (centre), Kaziemah (right) and Hazimah (left) proudly showing their Bachelor's Degree after the convocation ceremony yesterday. - Photo by Aniq Azraei

Little graduate stands tall at UMS convocation

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By Amy Dangin

KOTA KINABALU: Standing at 98 centimetres, many would not expect Emy Aridah Aripin to be a 26-year-old accounting graduate and mistake her for a three-year-old instead.

When she received her scroll, a Bachelor of Accounting with Honours during the fifth session of Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS)'s 16th Convocation ceremony at the university here yesterday, the auditorium was filled with cheers applauding Emy for defying the odds against her vertically-challenged physique.

The lass who hails from Beaufort and the eldest of five siblings, weighs only 24 kilogrammes, but has the heart of a fighter and refused to let her 'littleness' define her.

She admitted though that she would not have gotten through without the help from the university's helpful and kind community, especially the support and friendship of three of her closest friends, namely Kaziemah Sariman, Hazimah Zaiman and Azizah Abdul Kadir.

"We have been friends since our study years in Kota Kinabalu Polytechnic from 2007 to 2009 and they have helped a lot; picking me up for classes and sending me home after. We spent a lot of time together that we've become like sisters.

"UMS has also been helpful and accommodating, like how I was always given a ground-floor room at the residential college, and lecturers who are understanding and supportive. They never once made me feel little about myself," said the smiling, adorable lass when met after receiving her scroll yesterday.

Emy currently works at an audit firm, SC Yong & Chia, as an accounting and audit assistant, a job she landed almost right after graduating.

Her mother, Simpul Jumat, 46, credited her eldest daughter's achievement to her own determination as she raised Emy to be independent despite her shortcomings.

"Even getting into a university was a dream she planted on her own without us having to dictate her on what to study or what to do. She did it on her own. But to be able to witness her receive her scroll today is truly special," said Simpul.

While convocations are a joyous occasion for many, it was rather a sombre one for Surinah Abdullah, 47, from Sandakan, who went on stage to receive the scroll on behalf of her son, Shazwan Hazlami.

"Shazwan died in an accident on February 23, this year," said Surinah. He was 22 years old.

Apparently, Shazwan and Norashila Abdullah from Miri, both final year students in UMS' school of business management, were involved in a road accident

on the said date. Both did not survive the tragedy.

Friends disclosed that they both had planned to get engaged after completing their studies. At the point of their demise, they were scheduled to do their practical training. UMS however granted a special case privilege for their scrolls to be given out to their family members, due to the incident that claimed their lives.

"He was a very pleasant lad and his friends and lecturers can tell you how he always had a smile on his face and was always ready to help others," said Surinah of her son.

"We had so many plans after his graduation. Seeing all these young graduates here, I can't help but wish I did not have to go up on that stage on his behalf."