

# 'Never use disability as an excuse not to achieve success'

DE 27.11.2014 4

KOTA KINABALU: One must never use his or her disability as an excuse to not achieve success.

Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) Postgraduate Award recipient Jailani Idris, who suffers from an inherited, degenerative eye disease known as Retinitis Pigmentosa (RP), is a firm believer of this principle.

Jailani, who just received his PhD in Curriculum and Teaching, had suffered the disease since young, leaving him with impaired vision that will eventually result on total vision loss.

"There was a time in my life when I had decided to quit and give up as it was not easy for me to pursue my studies with my condition besides the need to care for my two disabled children," he said, adding that he had to read and type his work in large fonts due to his eyesight problems.

"I did not give up. It was difficult but I did not give up. I wanted to show to my family and children that I was capable of doing it," he said.

Jailani, who had four children, also said two of his children had suffered from a medical condition known as Hydrocephalus or 'water on the brain', which is a build-up of excess fluid on the brain.

He was in tears when he told the press that he lost his daughter three weeks ago to the disease, about 20 days before his convocation.

"It was a terrible experience for me because I did not know whether I should be happy going up the stage to receive my scroll. I had tears in my eyes and I'm sure it's definitely not tears of happiness.

"I wanted my late daughter to be on my side as I received my scroll because she was born when I first started with my studies. She had been there throughout my studies, too, and I expected her to be there with me during my graduation," he said.

He also recalled the time when he was supposed to have his viva presentation and his one-year-old son who suffered from Hydrocephalus was admitted to the hospital at the same time for having ulcers on both his eyes that resulted in him losing both his eyesight.

However, Jailani, who is a teacher at SMK Gadong, Beaufort, said he feels contented to be able to finish his studies.

"I must thank my wife and all my family members for helping me throughout my studies. I would not be here today if it was not because of them helping me and driving me around to campus," he said.

On his plans, Jailani said he plans to write and publish a book about his life experiences.

Meanwhile, another UMS PhD gradu-



Raymond pictured with his award.



Jailani

ate, Raymond Alfred @ Jenry, who hails from Kg Tenghilan, Tuaran, also said he is happy to be selected to receive the Best Theses Award.

"I did not expect that I will be able to receive the award," he said, adding that his research was focused on the Bornean elephants.

Raymond, 43, who is the first to do research on Bornean elephants, said it took him seven to eight years to complete his research.

According to him, he will be publishing the first thesis on Bornean elephants for the reference of the younger generations by the end of January next year, thanks to the support he received from Japan-based Borneo Conservation Trust which he is currently attached to.

"I have to admit that it was never difficult for me throughout my studies as my job is relevant to the study I pursued. My passion towards the subject also contributed to my success.

"If one acquires the passion for doing something, then he or she will not even realise the effort and time spent on it.

"However, I did find it difficult to recap especially when I decided to hold my research for my sports activities," he said, adding that he had to start from bottom when he first started with his PhD studies due to his engineering background.

Raymond said he had financial problems throughout his studies but it did not deter him from pursuing his studies.

"I wanted to prove that Malaysians are capable of achieving success given the proper network and assistance.

"Most scientists and researchers from foreign countries would come here and do research on our wildlife and at the end of the day, they would return to their own country with the data they collected," he said, adding that the purpose of his studies was to benefit the future generations.

When asked about how he divided his time between his studies and family, Raymond explained that he would use to bring his family along when going down the field for research purposes.

"Even my five-year-old daughter now understands and is familiar with the wildlife," he said. - Larissa Lumandan