



From left to right: Mansour, Abdul Sabah and Cosmas with their scrolls.

Former Sabah Water Dept Director among UMS grads

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Sherell Jeffrey

KOTA KINABALU: Taking a step back from years of hard work and relaxing at home is normally associated with retirement, but that is not the case for 71-year-old Datuk Cosmas Julius Abah.

The former Water Department Director, who retired in 2003, received his Degree of Doctor of Philosophy by Research (Linguistic) during the Universiti Malaysia Sabah's (UMS) 20th Convocation Ceremony, here, Saturday.

He said he decided to further his studies in linguistics, something a lot different from what he used to do.

"There were many times during the course that I asked myself why I put myself in this situation. Many times I wanted to give up but I prayed and thank God that I have made it," said the grandfather from Papar.

He also said he chose to do research on the Dusunic language as he thinks that it needs to be preserved, adding that it was also because of this passion that he managed to persevere.

Another graduate, Abdul Sabah Mohd @ Mohammad Sabah Mohd, may only be 4 feet 10 inches tall, but his determination to pursue his studies proved that being physically special is no obstacle to earning one's degree.

The 50-year-old from Sandakan, who received his Masters Degree by Research in History, said everyone has the right to gain knowledge.

"I hold true to the principle that learning is a lifelong experience. I also thank my wife for her support and motivation all these years," he said.

"When I first told my wife of my intention to pursue my masters degree, she said 'It's up to you, I am behind you all the way'... her words kept me going," said the father of one.

Abdul Sabah, who is currently attached to the Education Department in Sandakan, plans to pursue his PhD.

Meanwhile, Mansour Hassani Abdalla, from Tanzania, said UMS was initially not his first choice of university.

The 29-year-old who received his Masters Degree by Research in Computer Science said he came to realise that UMS was just as good as other universities, adding that UMS is far better compared to his local universities back home.

They are among a total of 5,003 graduates who will receive their degrees held in six sessions over the three days starting Saturday. The graduates comprise 4,276 undergraduates and 727 post-graduates.

Meanwhile, Head of State Tun Dr Juhar Mahiruddin, who is also UMS Chancellor, said gaining knowledge is important for everyone regardless of race, place and time.

"Hence, many proverbs related to knowledge have been revealed as a reminder of the importance of knowledge, among them is 'tuntutlah ilmu sehingga ke liang lahad'," he said, adding that graduates are the future reflection of the country who will be the successors to leaders of today.

"We, the older generation will go, and you (graduates) will continue the legacy of the State and the country, when you start your career, remember the leaders around you, remember your parents, your teachers and lecturers.

"Conduct the responsibilities entrusted to you with integrity, the country needs fresh, energetic, creative and innovative workforce," he said when delivering his speech in conjunction with UMS' 20th Convocation Ceremony, here.

Juhar went on to say that emulating the work of great nations like Japan has to be blended according to local needs, God willing the work values will become the identity of young Malaysians who will become civilisation of the nation.

He said Malaysia still has the space and opportunity for the people to advance and seek without humility, engage in healthy competition rather than be envious.

"Out there is a place to apply your knowledge, not a place to be frivolous, a place to respect each other and not to insult and defame because Malaysia is a country full of manners and politeness," he said.

He said when UMS graduates excel, tomorrow will be a glorious one, capable of elevating self-esteem, family, race and nation.

"I pray that graduates will have a brilliant achievement in whatever endeavours they may choose, and we pray that what they choose will have blessings from God.

Towards this end, he congratulated all UMS residents for organising the 20th Convocation Ceremony, specially celebrating a total of 5,003 graduates who received their diploma, bachelor, masters and PhDs over the three-day event which will end on Nov 26.