

Norafizan receives Royal Education Award

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KOTA SAMARAHAN: All those early mornings slaving over the hot stove making cakes have been worth it for Morliah Hazmi, 54, as she watched her daughter, Dayang Norafizan Awang Chee, receive the top award at Universiti Malaysia Sarawak's (Unimas) 12th convocation yesterday.

Norafizan, 22, received the Royal Education Award from the chancellor who is also Yang di-Pertua Negeri Tun Datuk Patinggi Abang Muhammad Salahuddin. She graduated with a degree in Chemical Resources from the faculty of Resource Science and Technology.

"We are not a rich family. All my children were put through school with a lot of hard work. I helped to earn some money for the family by making cakes while my husband was away at work," Morliah said as she embraced her second youngest daughter.

What's truly amazing about Norafizan's family is that she has seven siblings who are all university graduates. Her youngest sister has also just entered a local university.

Morliah added that the education of her children was always her top priority, and for them to do well in school or university, a strong family bond was very important.

Her husband, 58-year-old Awang Chee Awang Jali, said he had always believed that Norafizan would do well in her studies.

"I'm very proud of her," said the Telekom Malaysia Bhd retiree.

Norafizan, who scored a cumulative grade point average (CGPA) of 3.49 and had won the dean's award thrice, thanked her parents for their sacrifices and support.

"I am very touched to be given this award, thanks to my parents," said Norafizan, who is now a teacher at SM Teknik Sejingkat. She hoped to continue her studies in chemistry in the United Kingdom.



PRIDE AND JOY: Norafizan gets a kiss from her mother, as her father looks on.

Asked what her secret to success was, she replied: "There's no secret. Just hard work." In her citation for the award, Norafizan was described as a student who was very active academically, in co-curricular activities and also in community programmes. She has been to Japan on a cultural exchange programme, and had also represented the country in various programmes in France, Holland and the United Kingdom.

The Royal Education Award is given to Bumi and non-Bumi student. Shalin Lee Wan Fei, who graduated in nursing from the faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, won the award for

the non-Bumi category.

Both Norafizan and Shalin are from Kuching.

Shalin's citation said that she was a participant in the 13th International Congress on Infectious Disease and the First Biennial International Evidence-Based Nursing Conference.

The 24-year old daughter of a police officer has earned the deans award five out of eight semesters.

The head of state meanwhile presented awards to five other graduates.

The Chancellor's Award was given to Oscar Dousin (Human Resource Development, Cognitive Sciences and Human Development) and the Pro-Chancellor's Award was

given to Terence Chan Paul Wang (Mechanical Engineering and Manufacturing, Engineering).

The Special Senate Award went to Shirley Voo Siew Nee (Computer Science, Computer Science and Information Technology), Tan Ai Tang (Civil Engineering) and Willy Chin Siaw Min (Science and Animal Resource Management, Resource Science and Technology).

The convocation this year is staggered for five sessions until Wednesday, involving a total of 1,591 students. Chief Minister Pehin Sri Abdul Taib Mahmud, who is Unimas Pro-Chancellor, will present the scrolls today.