



Ranjani (centre) and Jong (right) with another excellence award recipient Watson Chung Xie Khim.

## 4,553 graduates in 15th UMS Convocation

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**KOTA KINABALU:** A batch of 4,553 fresh graduates received their scrolls at the Universiti Malaysia Sabah's (UMS) 15th Convocation yesterday.

One of them, Ranjani A/P Rajamanikam, 23, who received Convocation Book Award for her outstanding academic achievement, said she is now one step closer to achieving her dream of obtaining a doctorate degree in honour of her late father.

"I made a promise to my father that I will get good results and continue my studies to the PhD level. He passed away before he could see me hold that degree but I will continue until I make good on that promise," she said.

The third child among four siblings, Ranjani said she lost her father five years ago when she was still in Form Six, but her brother and sisters had helped to keep her motivated.

She said receiving the award

was the best gift she could give to them and her mother, who had sacrificed a lot for her education since her father's passing.

"I am planning to work for a few years before I continue to pursue my dream," Ranjani said.

The recipient of the Royal Education Award in the non-Bumiputera category, Jong Lin Wei, said graduating with an award was like a dream come true.

She was given the award after graduating with a grade of 3.8 in her Biotechnology Bachelor's degree programme.

"This was unexpected, but it sure means a lot to me," she said, attributing her achievement to her dedication and unwavering focus on her studies.

The 23-year-old from Kuching said she did not waste too much time having fun or hanging out with friends as she prioritised her studies, even during

semester breaks.

Jong also said she wished to continue her studies in Peninsular Malaysia.

Meanwhile, UMS Vice Chancellor Professor Dr Mohd Harun Abdullah urged the graduates to continue developing themselves even after they have left university.

Graduates must continue to strive for excellence, he said, not only in education but in everything they do, to be productive citizens with meaningful contributions to their community and country.

Urging the younger generation to pursue higher education, Mohd Harun said only 23.2 per cent of the workforce in Malaysia has tertiary education.

He noted that Malaysia needed to have at least 45 per cent of its workers to have tertiary education in order to achieve the developed country status by 2020.