

# 74-year-old grandmother makes history as UMS's oldest PhD graduate

By [Olivia Miwil](#) - December 8, 2024 @ 10:31am



Datin Saidutal Badru Mohd Said Keruak was the oldest graduate to receive a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree during Universiti Malaysia Sabah's (UMS) 26th Convocation Ceremony here yesterday. PIC COURTESY OF UMS

KOTA KINABALU: Datin Saidutal Badru Mohd Said Keruak was the oldest graduate to receive a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree during Universiti Malaysia Sabah's (UMS) 26th Convocation Ceremony here yesterday.

The 74-year-old grandmother of three, who is also the older sister of former chief minister Datuk Seri Salleh Said Keruak, said age is not a barrier to success as long as it is accompanied by determination.

"I hope my achievement serves as an inspiration to the youth out there who wish to pursue higher education.

"Don't focus too much on age; what matters is your will and spirit because the journey of acquiring knowledge is not an easy one," the former Syariah lawyer was quoted in a statement.

She added that although she had received an offer from the International Islamic University Malaysia, she chose to study History at UMS to return to her roots.

"I earned my bachelor's and master's degrees from Universiti Malaya. For my Bachelor's degree, I was already a grandmother at 40. I later pursued my Master's at the age of 55.

"I seized the opportunity to further my studies when my children had completed their education and established careers of their own.

"At the same time, I began my career as a secretary in 1970 at the Chief Minister's Office in Sabah under the leadership of Tun Datu Mustapha Datu Harun."

Hailing from Kota Belud, Sabah, she expressed her gratitude to her husband, children, and grandchildren for being her greatest source of motivation and support throughout her academic journey.

She received her PhD scroll in History from the Yang di-Pertua Negeri Sabah Tun Juhar Mahiruddin, during the UMS 26th Convocation Ceremony.

A total of 359 graduates received their degrees in various fields, including PhDs, medical degrees, and research master's degrees, at the Chancellor Hall of UMS.