



**Proud moment:** Gurcharam (third from right) being surrounded by her family members during the convocation yesterday.

## UPM's oldest grad personifies determination and hard work

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**KUALA LUMPUR:** Gurcharam Kaur has harboured the dream of being a university graduate for more than 40 years. Yesterday, her dream finally became a reality.

Among the 7,597 graduates from Universiti Putra Malaysia this year, none could have been happier at their convocation ceremony than the 66-year-old retired English teacher from Kuala Pilah.

"I always wanted to go to university, I just never had the chance to do it when I was growing up," said Gurcharam, now a proud holder of a Bachelor of Education.

The second of five siblings, Gurcharam sacrificed her education to take care of her aging parents and young siblings.

Immediately after finishing her secondary education, Gurcharam worked as a temporary teacher for six years before she was accepted to the Malay Teachers' College, which she

attended for a year from 1967.

Upon graduation, Gurcharam began working on a permanent basis in her alma mater SM Tunku Kurshiah.

In 1980, Gurcharam attended Universiti Malaya, where she obtained a diploma in education in 1981. She continued teaching English in government schools until her retirement in 1997, after which her services were snapped up by Cernai Matriculation College, Serting.

But after her mother passed away in 1998 and her father in 2002, Gurcharam found herself with too much time on her hands.

Under the encouragement of her younger brother, Gurcharam ventured back into education.

Not only did Gurcharam achieve her dream, she did it in style, appearing on the Dean's List five times in eight semesters.

"I dedicate all of this to my parents, especially my mother, who pushed my father to send me to school when it was not the fashion for girls to go to school," Gurcharam said.