

## Each degree has a story

For at least one 1997 graduate at Autumn Convocation, keeping her head above water while finishing her degree meant more than finishing her final assignments.

Ursula Stelman completed her Master of Public Administration thesis while her family battled to save their home from the rising waters of the great Winnipeg flood of '97. Stelman, Director of Community Services for the City of Winnipeg, not only had to coordinate a range of municipal services during the record flood of the Red River but also had to finish her thesis. All the while, the flood waters were approaching her family home.

Stelman, who completed her degree on a part-time, correspondence basis, attended Convocation with her husband and two daughters.

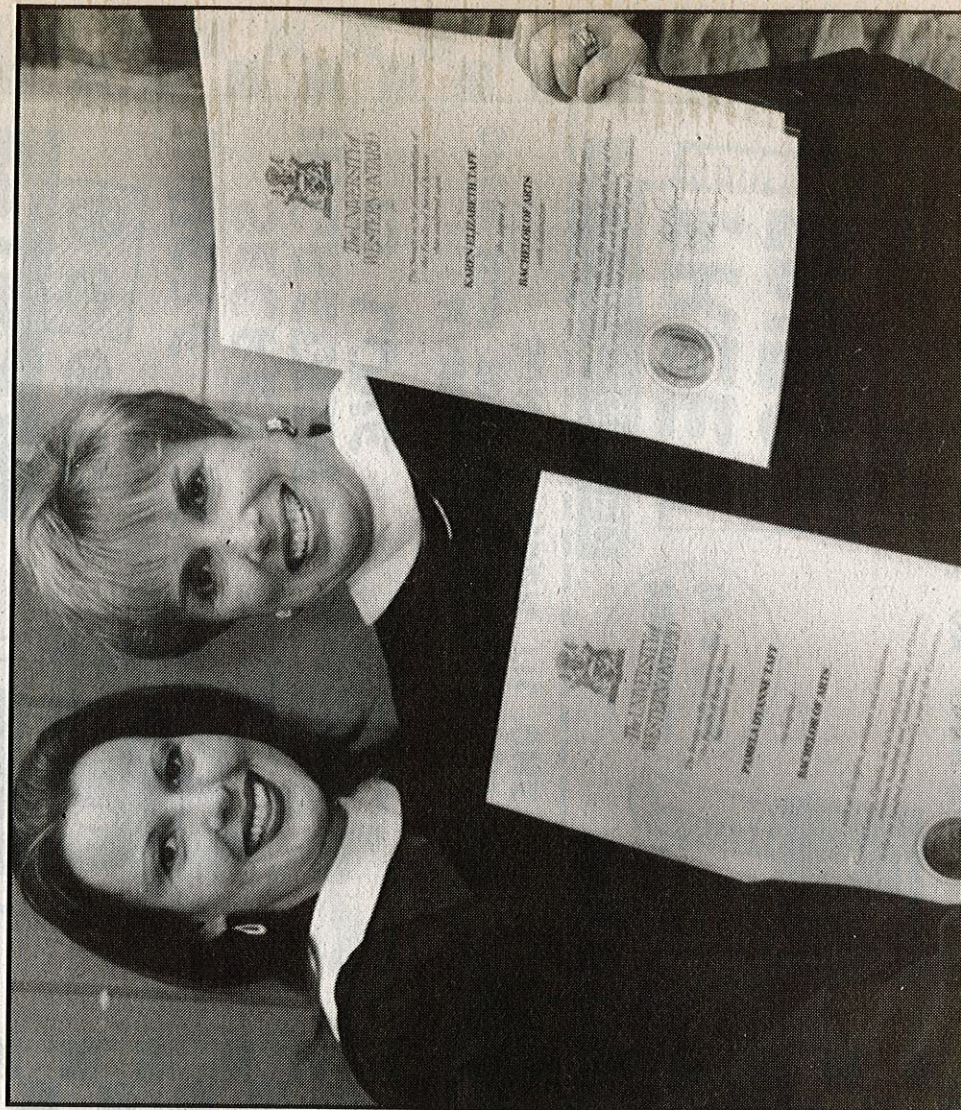
Another mother, Karen Taff, graduated in the same class as her daughter. Pam Taff, 25, followed her mother across the stage as the pair graduated with Bachelor of Arts degrees.

"I'm so proud of my mother for going back and getting a degree," said Pam, who added that working on their degrees together under the same roof has brought the two of them closer together.

Bob Scragg, 48, was one of the first MBA grads to complete the videoconferenced Executive MBA Program. He started the program in 1995 and during that time developed and launched his own product, a device that turns city traffic lights green for emergency vehicles. The device, which is activated by sound, is designed to improve response time and safety for emergency vehicles.

Scragg received his Western MBA training at a remote site in Vancouver.

Carol Fountain has been working on her degree for more than a few years. The 49-year old achiever received her BA in English, a degree that she started in 1966. She left school to raise a family and returned, part-time in 1989. Fountain is challenged by arthritis. She was inspired to return when she saw her children go to university.



Close to 1,500 students were eligible to receive degrees and diplomas at Western's 269th Convocation held in Alumni Hall October 23 - 24. Among the graduates were Karen Taff (right) and daughter Pam who earned Bachelor of Arts degrees. Working on their degrees together under the same roof has brought the two of them closer together, says Pam.