

## 263rd CONVOCATION

# Graduates show talent, energy, perseverance

More than 1,500 students crossed the Alumni Hall stage last week to receive their degrees and diplomas at the University's 263rd Convocation.

That short walk is a symbolic culmination of a journey through academe. For some that journey is longer than for others. For Roberta (Bobby) Hampton, Timetable/Examinations Officer in the Office of the Registrar, the journey to the Alumni Hall stage began 25 years ago.

Hampton joined the registrar's office in late 1967-68. She originally had come to the University in search of part-time work, but found that there was a full-time position open. She took a few courses part-time in 1969, but soon shifted priorities somewhat as she developed other interests and her career in the registrar's office progressed.

"When I started working here I fully intended to work for a few years and then go back to school full-time," said Hampton.

In 1986, she returned to classes with renewed enthusiasm, taking summer and winter courses through the Faculty of Part-Time and Continuing Education. Last week, PTCE awarded Hampton the Angela Armit Gold Medal, an award given to the outstanding part-time student. Hampton credits her colleagues with encouraging and helping her to persevere.

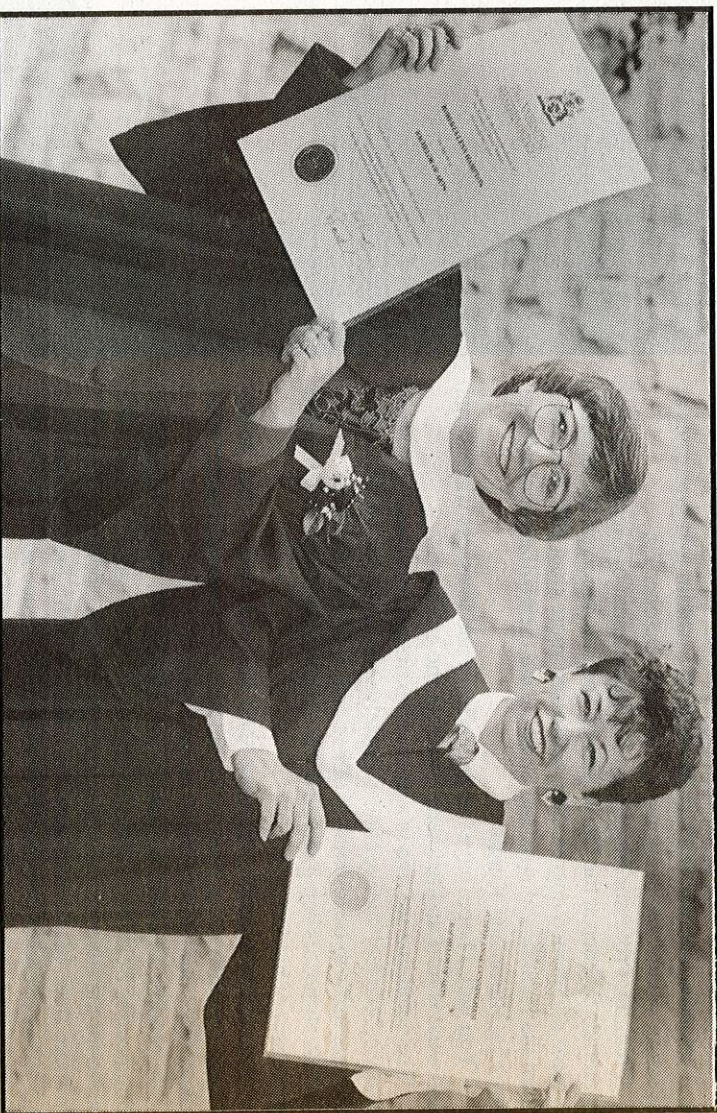
"One doesn't do this sort of thing alone," said Hampton. "This is a pretty demanding job. I couldn't have finished my degree without the support of the people here."

At every Convocation there are numerous stories from graduates that speak to the tremendous diversity of talent and energy students bring to and develop at Western. Among this fall's graduates were a nurse turned library professor and a person who funded her first class at Western with lottery winnings.

Strong determination, and a little bit of luck, brought Peggy Clark (Novak), 33, to Western five years ago. Married with two young children, she desperately wanted to return to the university education she had left many years before but was now unable to afford.

Cleaning out her cupboards one day, Clark came across a number of old lottery tickets. The tickets were winners and the \$900 she cashed in on was more than enough to pay for her first few courses. Clark received a Bachelor of Arts degree October 20.

People told Lynda Baker, 49, that she was crazy to be making a career change at her age. After working 15 years as a nurse and eight years as a health information librarian, she enrolled in



*These two UWO staff members were among the more than 1,500 students who graduated during Western's 263rd Convocation last week. Roberta (Bobby) Hampton (left), Office of the Registrar, and Judi Cunningham, Campus Recreation, Faculty of Kinesiology, both graduated with BA degrees Friday after years of part-time study while working at Western.*

Western's doctoral program at the Graduate School of Library and Information Science in 1989. Five years later, PhD in hand, she is now an Assistant Professor at Wayne State University in Michigan.

Baker's PhD thesis examined the information needs of women with multiple sclerosis. As many

as 50,000 Canadians suffer from the disease.

Bill Huitema, 43, once thought he'd never be more than a "ditch digger." At least, he says, that's what his elementary school teacher had him pegged to be. He left the one-room schoolhouse he'd been educated in after Grade 9 to work as a laborer.

Huitema maintained a dream for a formal education and he started classes at Western in 1989. Huitema graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in history October 21 and is now pursuing his life-long dream of becoming a teacher. He is enrolled in the Bachelor of Education program at the University of Windsor.