

# Mature grads liked university so much they're going back



Years of study while trying to balance a family life only whetted the appetites of Mary Lou Jones, Daria French and Winston St. Clair for more learning.

By Linda Moorhouse  
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For mature students Mary Lou Jones, Daria French and Winston St. Clair, juggling a family life and textbooks was often a hard grind, but it was a grind they loved.

Just minutes after collecting their degrees at the University of Western Ontario convocation ceremonies, all three said they plan to continue their studies.

Londoner Mary Lou Jones, 42, thinks being a mature student is great.

"I have a much clearer idea of what I want to do now, of who I am. (My courses) helped me with that."

After collecting her diploma in art therapy, Jones reaffirmed her liking for school and said that continuing her education is what she wants to do.

"I'm going back (to school). I want to do a cross-disciplinary degree in visual arts and psychology."

**WINTER DOLDRUMS:** A 1971 graduate of the Ontario college of art, Jones said the most difficult part of going back to school was the "winter doldrums." That and juggling her schedule to spend enough time with her two adopted daughters, Zoe and Katelyn, who came from St. Vincent, West Indies, several years ago.

"Living in co-op (housing) and the help of a lot of friends helped me get through," said Jones, who continues to work in art doing printmaking.

Four-year-old Katelyn said she was very proud of her mother for



Daria French, who had to drive more than 70 kilometres from her home on the Muncey reserve southwest of Delaware to attend classes at UWO, is travelling to China before returning for her master's degree. Winston St. Clair was 19 years getting his honors BA in history, so he's quite prepared to spend a few more years pursuing his master's.

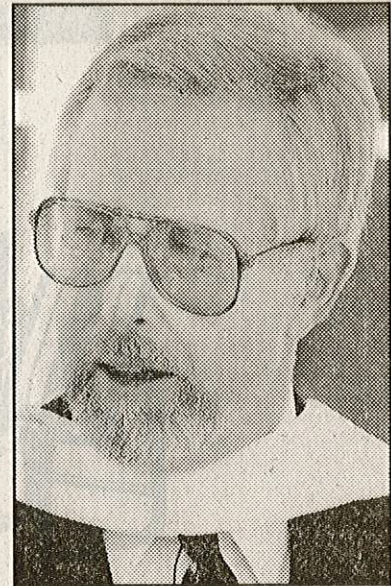
getting her degree. She also swore she never did her mom's homework.

Daria French knows that being a wife and mother can itself be time-consuming and difficult but add full-time student to the schedule and life becomes a continual deadline.

"It was very demanding. I had to wear a lot of different hats," said French, who collected her honors bachelor of arts degree in geography Monday. "The whole experience is really crisis-oriented and the ending always seems far off in the distance."

The mother of two boys, aged nine and 11, had to drive more than 70 kilometres round-trip from her home on the Muncey reserve southwest of Delaware to attend classes at UWO and be sure she was free by 3:30 p.m. to pick up her children from school.

"I would spend 3:30 to 8 p.m. with the kids and then stay up until 2 a.m. studying. It was a struggle to always get things in on time," said French, who credits her husband, Mark, and their two children for being under-



standing and helpful.

A graduate of the radio and television broadcast program at Ryerson, French said she has always had an interest in geography and anthropology and has done a lot of travelling to fuel that interest. She is off again to China this summer before returning to study for her master's.

**19 YEARS:** Winston St. Clair has been going to school so long it has become a part of his life. The 60-year-old Londoner received his honors bachelor of arts degree in history after 19 years of part-time study.

"What a relief it is to get this. I've been going to school so long I've lost track of time."

St. Clair works as a technical officer in the UWO business school. His first few courses were in economics but he soon switched to history, focusing on Canadian history, both political and military. He plans to take a year off before returning to school to get his master's degree.

"It will seem like a real holiday with no deadlines, no essays. A real break in the routine."