

Mother joins daughter at Western convocation

By John Miner
Free Press Reporter

When Pam Taff walks across the platform to receive her Bachelor of Arts degree today, she'll be only a few feet behind her mother, Karen Taff.

It promises to be an emotional trip for both mother and daughter at the University of Western Ontario convocation.

"I'm actually going out to get waterproof mascara as we speak," Pam said Thursday.

For the past five years mother and daughter lived and studied together as they earned their university degrees. Pam said it has changed how she views her mother.

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Pam Taff on her mother, Karen Taff

Pam said one thing she learned is how much she is like her mother. "I'm quite proud of the fact I'm like her."

And she gained a new respect for her mother, who earned her degree while working full-time.

Karen said she also has a new perspective from the years of working together. The two will be the first in their family to be awarded university degrees.

"I learned that she is a very bright, intellectual woman. Before, I had looked at her more as a daughter. I remember reading one of her papers and I was just amazed at what she had done," Karen said.

When the two hit a tough stretch in their courses, they were able to provide each other with the support to get through, Karen said. And they also had the help of her husband Bob and son Scott.

"The two of them picked up all the



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Mother and daughter students Karen, right, and Pam Taff lived and studied together for the past five years; below, Hilary Weston is one of a number of recipients of honorary degrees at this year's UWO convocation.

loose ends. There is no way we could have made it without them," Karen said.

Karen Taff worked on her degree while working in the human resources department at 3M in London. She still works there.

Pam is now in management with Roots Canada in the Toronto area.

The Taffs are two of almost 1,500 receiving degrees and diplomas at Western's 269th Convocation this week.

Three honorary degrees are being awarded as well.

On Thursday, Ontario Lt.-Gov. Hilary Weston received an honorary degree. Today, honorary degrees will be awarded to broadcaster Peter Gzowski and disability rights activist Rick Hansen.

