

**A**t 16 she graduated from high school. At 83 she graduated from university.

Tillsonburg's Violet Clements has always been an avid learner. She went through elementary school in only five years, and at age 12 was the youngest in her class when she started high school. Throughout her life she has taken night classes and taught arts and crafts to seniors, the mentally and physically handicapped, women prison inmates and Sunday school children.

Now she hopes to pass on her strong belief in the importance of an education to her 10 grandchildren, who she hopes will take advantage of her offer to pay their way through their post-secondary endeavours. This is partly the reason why she decided to enroll at Western in 1980.

"It helps them to get started and with me going to graduate it is going to mean a lot to them because they'll think, 'If grandma can do it, so can I.'"

It was her granddaughter Callie Clements, a Western kinesiology graduate, who phoned the university to inquire where her grandmother stood in terms of satisfying her degree requirements. On Tuesday, she helped her grandmother walk up the Alumni Hall stage to receive her degree.

"I know what education has done for me, so I'm hoping it will do the same for them," says Clements. "It makes them think. It doesn't answer the question for you, but it makes you think of what the possibilities could be."

Clements sold her house in order to help pay for her grandchildren's post-secondary school tuition. "It's now that they need it, not when they get older and this gives them an incentive to finish their education," she says.

Taking a wide range of courses was a lot easier than she thought it would be, says Clements, who achieved honours in all but one of her classes. "The kids were wonderful," she says.

Clements, who completed her most recent course in 1993, feels there is nothing more valuable than an education. "Education gives you an insight into the workings of other people," she says. "I didn't produce any doctors or lawyers, but I don't care. If they are up and up citizens, and very sure that they have to do what's right, then that is what is important."

Clements received a three-year Bachelor of Arts degree in Visual Arts on Tuesday, June 5.



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