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Java Talk
(for May 31 to June 6, 2007)

Every Age Is The Best Age

The World's Oldest Graduate

The University of Victoria's 2007 Spring Convocation ceremonies will begin June 5th and run to the 8th. Degrees, diplomas, and certificates will be conferred to approximately three thousand students who have reached this milestone. The amazing diversity of these life-long learners, and the wide differences in their ages, will be as usual.

At Fort Hays State University in Kansas, however, Nola Ochs made headlines around the world for being recognized as the world's oldest graduate, when she received her bachelor's degree in general studies and history, on May 12th, 2007. Previously, this honour was held by Mozelle Richardson, who received a journalism degree, at the age of 90, from the University of Oklahoma, in 2004.

"I don't dwell on my age," Nola said during one of many recent interviews about going to university at her age. "It might limit what I can do. As long as I have my mind and health, it's just a number." Nola would rather that people didn't know her age, but now that she is in the Guinness World Records, everyone knows. "I never think of my age. We don't die at a certain age. And if people didn't know they were getting a certain age, maybe the same age their father died or their mother died, I think they'd be better off."

What's next for Nola, who turned 95 last November? She wants to get a job as a storyteller on a cruise ship and travel the world telling stories! Nola is also considering further study to do a master's degree. Meanwhile, one of her history professors wants to record oral histories with her. First, however, her plans were to return to her farm, to help bring in the wheat harvest.

So, happy graduations, everyone! Oh, what stories you must have, too!

Deidre Hill