

YOUR MONEY

You're never too old to go to UOG

Senior citizens
can take courses
free of charge

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More than 200 students turned their tassels on May 30, marking the receipt of their diplomas during the University of Guam's commencement ceremonies.

Some, like John Dierking, weren't worried about trying to find a post-graduation job.

Dierking, 75, is a retired attorney with five grown kids and an empty nest.

He was one of 21 senior citizen students enrolled in the University of Guam's senior citizen program this past spring. It's open to people 55 years or older.

The possibilities for higher education are limitless, according to Cathleen Moore-Linn, director of integrated market research and development at the university. Tuition is free for the fall and spring semesters, she said.

The only requirement is that the senior citizen must have lived on Guam for five years and that space must be available in the given classes. Otherwise, the track each student chooses is dependent on his or her preferences.

"Many people still have decades ahead of them," Moore-Linn said. "So why not fill that time with learning about things that inspire and interest you?"

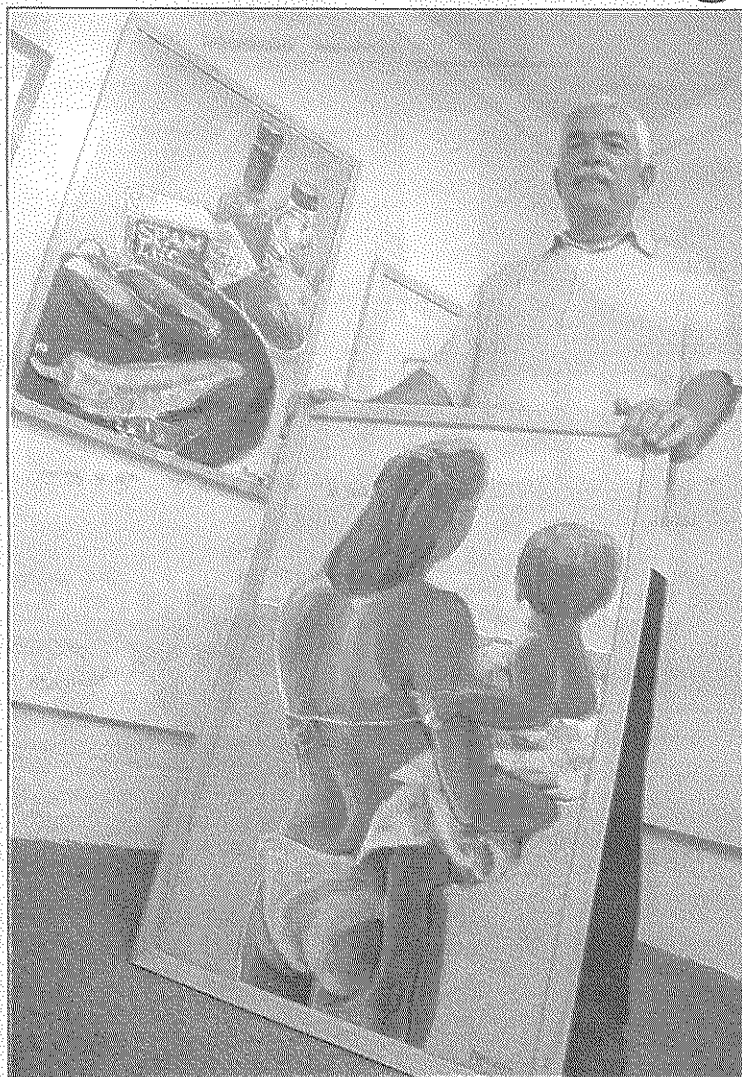
Dierking said he chose to do just that.

Once a student of the Kansas City Art Institute, Dierking received a master's degree in art and a master's degree in English literature at the University of Guam.

"We live with images," Dierking said. "Transferring those images for people so they enjoy is very fulfilling."

As an art and literature student himself, Dierking suggests senior citizens take classes in humanities.

Aside from the financial benefit of returning to school in later life, it



Rick Cruz/For Pacific Sunday News

Manamko' college program: Retired attorney and artist John Dierking holds one of his works, "Madonna of the Beach," as another is displayed for the University of Guam's Undergraduate Exhibition at the Isla Center for the Arts in Mangilao.

also provides a sense of personal fulfillment, he said.

That's why 59-year-old Evelyn Anselmo decided to join the program. She said it was a great time to go back to school because tuition was affordable and her kids had grown to be young adults.

"So I have nothing but time on hand, other than work," she said.

At first it was intimidating to enter a classroom full of 20-something students sporting laptops and iPods, she said.

"I looked at the students around me; they're like 23, 24," Anselmo

said. But she said she didn't let the age difference become a handicap.

Initially Anselmo remembered telling her professors she didn't have the luxury of owning a computer at home. She would visit the school's computer lab to finish her projects, she recalled.

But Anselmo, a public administration major, learned that her age actually worked to her benefit in completing assignments.

When one project was assigned, Anselmo said many of the younger students had a hard time finding the resources to the finish the project,

SENIOR CITIZENS TUITION WAIVER PROGRAM

▲ Open to people 55 years or older.

▲ Tuition is free for the fall and spring semesters.

▲ Waiver program isn't available for summer semesters because summer classes operate on a self-sustaining basis.

▲ Senior citizen must have lived on Guam for five years.

▲ Class registration is dependent on space available in class.

TO LEARN MORE

▲ The course schedule is online at www.uog.edu.

▲ For more information, e-mail admitme@uog9.uog.edu

▲ Call the UOG Records Office at 735-2210/11.

to which she had easy access.

She used the contacts and social skills she'd gained through her work experience to obtain the information she needed.

"I went out and got my resources in two days and three days. ... The others came back they asked, 'How did you get that?' You have to use your customer skills, can't demand," Anselmo said.

"I find that the older one is, the more serious that person is about learning," Moore-Linn added.

Soon, Anselmo enjoyed being immersed in classrooms filled with young and eager minds, she said.

"Going back to school keeps you young, and young at heart," said Anselmo.

This time around, Anselmo said it wasn't the pressure of failing a test or the possibility of not getting a job that was pushing her to excel; it was the self-imposed pressure to perform well that kept her going.

She even gave her most difficult subject, math, a final shot — and was successful.

The experience has been so rewarding for her that she's encouraged some of her friends to try it, she said.

"You have to have a little confidence in yourself," she said. "Whatever your heart desires, don't let an obstacle in the way, like age."