

By Himself: The Older Man's Experience of Widowhood
by
Deborah K. van den Hoonaard

St. Thomas University is hosting a faculty book launch on Thursday, April 15 at 3:00pm in the lower concourse of Sir James Dunn Hall. Dr. Deborah K. van den Hoonaard, Canada Research Chair in Qualitative Research and Analysis and professor of Gerontology at St. Thomas, received a SSHRC grant to do the research for *By Himself: The Older Man's Experience of Widowhood*.

Popular books, movies and television present widowers as lost and unable to cope or care for themselves. In contrast, *By Himself* is an examination of real older widowers and shows how their daily lives change as well as their relationships with women, children, and friends.

To write the book, van den Hoonaard interviewed 26 widowers over the age of 60 who had lost their wives over the last 10 years. She spoke to men in both Atlantic Canada and retirement communities in Florida. The interviews asked the men to describe their experiences as a widower in their own words.

"Rather than count how often the widowers see their children or friends, *By Himself* concentrates on how widowers talk about their relationships with children and friends and their understanding of the meaning behind those relationships," says van den Hoonaard.

There are over 300,000 widowers in Canada, but we know very little about their lives. Van den Hoonaard explains that *By Himself* sheds light on the issues that are important to the men who find themselves in this situation. Dr. van den Hoonaard also studied widows in her 2001 book, *The Widowed Self: The Older Woman's Journey through Widowhood*.