

## Media Release

September 29, 2015

**Public Lecture – Friday, October 2 @ 3:30 pm**  
**“Learning to Be Old: Understanding Ageism”**  
**Dr. Deborah van den Hoonaard,**  
**Canada Research Chair in Qualitative Research and Analysis**

Dr. Deborah van den Hoonaard’s lecture on understanding ageism will kick off a conference on qualitative research that has attracted scholars from across North America.

“Today we have a life expectancy that earlier ages could not have dreamed of. An aging population is the hallmark of a successful society. How is it, then, that we consider one of the greatest achievements of our society to be a disaster?” said van den Hoonaard.

Her talk argues that the beliefs that underlie ageism—based on the premise that all old people are the same—pervades contemporary thinking. Despite the fact that becoming old involves physical changes, aging has a significant social component.

The free, public lecture takes place Friday, October 2, at 3:30 pm in the Ted Daigle Auditorium in Edmund Casey Hall.

This public presentation marks the culmination of van den Hoonaard’s two decades of working in gerontology. It explains that we learn to be old and accept myths associated with aging through the way people treat us. It uses the results of her qualitative studies and personal experience to illustrate this process.

van den Hoonaard is a sociologist and professor in the Gerontology Department and Canada Research Chair in Qualitative Research and Analysis at St. Thomas University. She is the author of *Qualitative Research in Action: A Canadian Primer* (2012, Oxford University Press), *By Himself, The Older Man’s Experience of Widowhood* (2010, University of Toronto Press), and *The Widowed Self: The Older Woman’s Journey through Widowhood*, published in 2001 by Wilfrid Laurier University Press. She is currently working on a study of women’s experience of widowhood in the 21st century.

The conference on “Qualitative Research Methods that Work: Voices from Experience” will take place Saturday, October 3 and Sunday, October 4. Scholars from universities in the United States and Canada will present on issues as diverse as observer approaches to ethnography, ethics and politics in ethnography, understanding the lived reality of people, and what researchers can learn from ecological thinking. For further information, see [www.stu.ca/acqra](http://www.stu.ca/acqra).

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