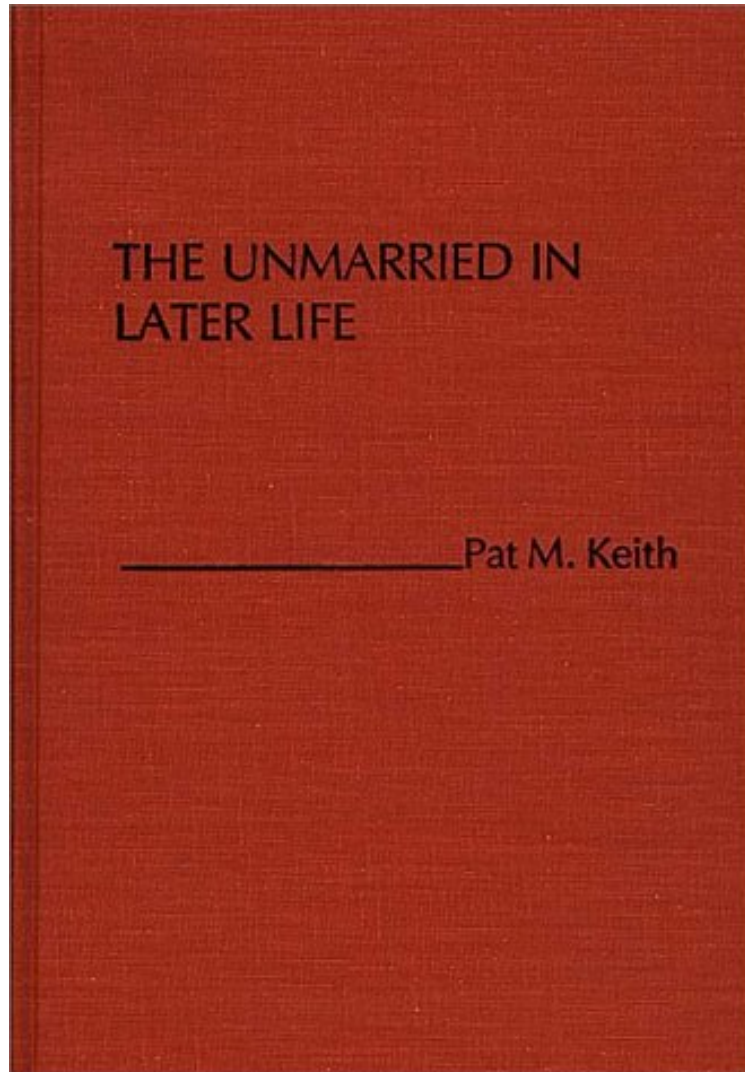


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The Unmarried in Later Life:

Pat Keith

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Pat Keith : The Unmarried in Later Life: before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Unmarried in Later Life::

This pioneering study examines the resources and well-being of older widowed, divorced or separated, and never-married men and women over time. The first comprehensive, longitudinal study of its kind ever published, The Unmarried in Later Life considers the effects of changes in health, finances, work, social networks, vulnerability, and psychological well-being and compares adaptations to these transitions for unmarried men and women. Because it

focuses attention on one of the fastest growing--yet often neglected--segments of the population, this volume is an ideal supplemental text for courses in sociology, gerontology, family studies, and the psychology of aging. Several features make *The Unmarried in Later Life* a unique contribution to the social sciences literature: The author considers unmarried categories (widowed, never-married, etc.) separately, permitting more extended comparisons between groups; The study is based upon a nationally representative sample and contains data on more unmarried persons than are usually available for study; The use of longitudinal data facilitates the observation of the unmarried over a longer period of time than is often possible; The author offers a detailed evaluation of common assumptions about living alone, challenging widely held negative stereotypes of the unmarried. What emerges is a clear view of the changes in social relationships and their patterns by marital status and gender over the course of a decade. Researchers and practitioners will find here much new information about the social status of the aged unmarried.

"In an excellent contribution to the gerontological literature, Keith examines how being single in old age affects health, finances, work, retirement, and social relationships. The book is based on data on men and women who are single, widowed, or divorced, and are included in both the 1969 and 1979 Longitudinal Retirement History Studies conducted by the US Census Bureau and the Social Security Administration. The study population consists of 2,049 unmarried, predominately white men and women who were aged 58-63 in 1969. Although researchers often study common factors such as widowhood, health, or institutionalization, these are frequently treated in a cross-sectional way and not examined over time as has been done here. Divided into 11 chapters, the book first describes the sample and then discusses health, finances, work, personal relationships, residence, and vulnerability in old age. . . . The text contains numerous percentages, tables, tests of association, and correlation coefficients that examine a variety of social variables and how they relate to prior marital status. The writing style is clear and concise. Strongly recommended for research libraries and for programs on gerontology. Upper-division undergraduates and above."-Choice

"The book's dense listing of empirical findings in chapter after chapter . . . does offer a good resource both for researchers needing a starting place for literature or basic empirical findings on a particular topic and for policymakers or practitioners seeking succinct discussions of the needs of particular subgroups. . . . I hope . . . it will inspire other researchers to conduct more focused studies on this growing population." *American Journal of Sociology* . . . the book helps fill a major void in the research literature on the unmarried in later life by its explicit comparisons of the three unmarried statuses. It should help dispell the still-pervasive myth that the unmarried are an undifferentiated category."-*Journal of Comparative Family Studies*

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About the Author PAT M. KEITH is Professor of Sociology at Iowa State University. She has published more than 70 articles and coedited the book, *Later Life Transitions*.