

JEAN SWANSON: WE NEED A NEW MAP



Director: Teresa Alfeld | **Cinematographer:** Vince Arvidson | **Editor:** Lawrence Le Lam | **Sound Recordist:** Caisha Thompson | 7 min | Canada

Synopsis: A profile of veteran activist and first-term Vancouver city councillor Jean Swanson as she works alongside the next generation of anti-poverty activists fighting systemic inequality.



Director bio: Teresa Alfeld is a director from Vancouver and the unceded Coast Salish territories of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh nations. She is a member of the Director's Guild of Canada, and the Documentary Organization of Canada. Teresa is drawn to complex characters navigating complicated worlds, and her films embrace both the humour and pathos of the human experience.

Teresa's feature documentary *The Rankin File: Legacy of a Radical* (produced with Opus 59 Films) was the opening night gala film at DOXA Documentary Film Festival in 2018 and had its broadcast premiere on The Knowledge Network in 2019. Teresa has written and directed several award-winning short comedy-dramas including *Closet Carnivore* (2004), *Charlie Gauvin* (2012) and *Roadkill* (2013), which have screened at film festivals across Canada.

Teresa will be directing her second feature documentary *Doug and the Slugs and Me* for CBC documentary Channel (with Opus 59 Films) in 2021.

Director statement: I first met Jean Swanson over ten years ago at the Poverty Olympics, an event protesting excessive spending on the 2010 Vancouver Olympics while the homelessness crisis raged on. I was taken aback by Jean—this soft-spoken older woman commanding the attention of the packed Carnegie Centre as she spoke clearly and emphatically about the need to end legislated poverty. We later reconnected when I made my first documentary about Harry Rankin and the progressive movement he helped build in Vancouver, and which Jean was a large part of. Since then, I've had the privilege of getting to know her as a colleague and friend.

Often called the "Canadian Bernie Sanders," Jean has the credibility and integrity forged through a decades-long career fighting the systems that keep people entrenched in poverty. Now that she is in her first elected role as a city councillor, it's been fascinating to watch Jean navigate creating change from inside government, while also working alongside the next generation of activists.

Jean Swanson: We Need a New Map features Jean candidly reflecting on the highs and lows of her forty-year career of activism, and what it means to dedicate your life to effecting change. My hope is for this documentary to inspire folks young and old through witnessing Jean's incredible journey and the tenacity that has defined her career. I hope audiences will also be galvanized by the energy and dedication of Jean's young colleagues Sara and Ishmam, and that viewers will consider their own paths towards becoming civically engaged.

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