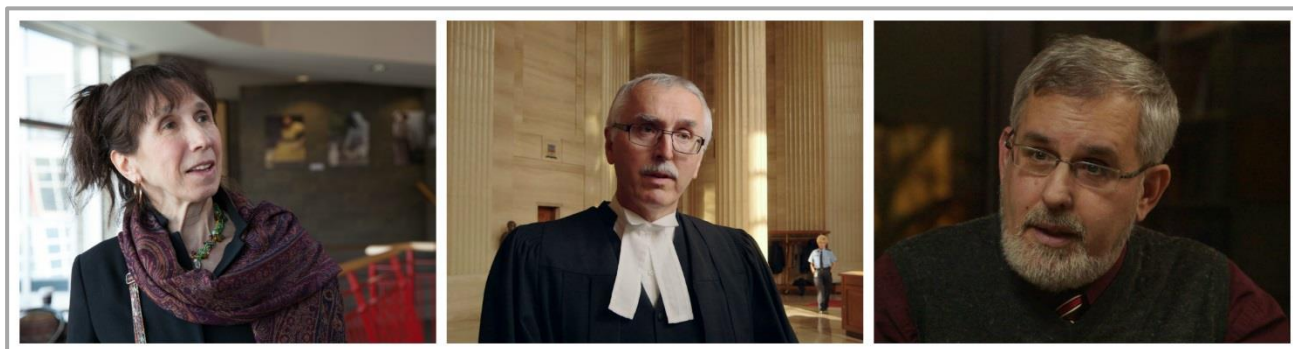


**News Release**  
 For Immediate Release

**A Productions Testa/NFB co-production**

**Three-part documentary series *Droit comme un F (The Fight for Francophone Rights)*, by Anne-Marie Rocher, launches on NFB.ca and TFO**

**An unprecedented overview of past and present battles for French education fought by Canadian francophone minorities**



December 1, 2015 – Montreal – National Film Board of Canada (NFB)

The documentary series ***Droit comme un F (The Fight for Francophone Rights)***, directed by Anne-Marie Rocher, highlights the human side of francophone minorities' judicial battles for education in their language. Co-produced by Productions Testa and the [National Film Board of Canada](http://www.nfb.ca) (NFB), in collaboration with [Groupe Média TFO](http://www.tfo.ca), each episode will be available to purchase by download at [NFB.ca](http://www.nfb.ca) (original French version with English subtitles). Starting on the day after its broadcast on TFO (in French), episodes go live online on **three consecutive Mondays: December 7, 14, and 21**. The entire series will remain online as of December 21, in Canada and internationally. There are also plans for a series of community screenings across the country during the winter of 2016.

***Droit comme un F*** is the first-ever overview of the significant legal battles waged by Canadian francophone minorities. Through interviews with parents, children, lawyers, sociologists, teachers and former ministers, the director spotlights the issues that have pushed francophones to commit to a long fight that many considered to be a lost cause. If the infrastructure needed to transmit culture, language and history is lacking, inadequate or nonexistent, what does the future hold for these people? Can the survival of their identity be ensured?

Each episode lasts one hour, and focuses on two legal challenges brought by francophone minorities outside Quebec. Some of these cases have proven successful, while others are still making headlines pending a court decision.

- Part 1: *Winning the Case* (Alberta and Nova Scotia)
- Part 2: *Our Rights, Our Fights* (Saskatchewan and Yukon)
- Part 3: *Setbacks and Justice* (Northwest Territories and British Columbia)

Written and directed by Anne-Marie Rocher. Produced by Anne-Marie Rocher (Productions Testa) and Dominic Desjardins (NFB).

## Detailed descriptions of episodes

### [Episode 1 – Winning the Case](#) – Alberta and Nova Scotia

**Broadcast December 6 at 9 p.m. ET on TFO; available online starting December 7 at NFB.ca**

In 1981, a small group of parents took steps to set up homogenous French schools in Alberta. A year later, Paul Dubé, Angéline Martel and Jean-Claude Mahé embarked on a legal battle to give francophones the right to the same services and institutions as anglophones (the Mahé case). They also wanted to be able to manage their schools independently from the English school board. In 1990, the Supreme Court of Canada finally sided with the parents. The ruling was a major victory for all francophones outside Quebec. Indeed, since then, 31 school boards have been formed and 627 schools created (with an enrolment of about 150,000 students per year).

In Nova Scotia, Acadian parents who witnessed the rapid assimilation of francophones in their area lobbied for access to French high schools. The Doucet-Boudreau case elicited strong reactions and divided the province. The case went all the way to the Supreme Court, which ruled in the parents' favour.

### [Episode 2 – Our Rights, Our Fights](#) – Saskatchewan and Yukon

**Broadcast December 13, 9 p.m. ET on TFO; available online starting December 14 at NFB.ca**

In Saskatchewan, francophone parents came together in the 1980s to ensure the survival and transmission of their language and culture. Lawyer Roger Lepage wanted to see a francophone school board set up. In 1986, a court remedy was sought. After a decade-long battle, the Conseil des écoles fransaskoises was finally formed in 1995.

In Yukon, the only French school is in Whitehorse. In 2009, a serious shortage of resources prompted the Yukon Francophone School Board to call on Lepage to apply for a court remedy. According to the board, the lack of school places and French schools plays a clear role in the assimilation of francophone minorities. The matter has yet to be settled.

### [Episode 3 – Setbacks and Justice](#) – Northwest Territories and British Columbia

**Broadcast December 20 at 9 p.m. ET on TFO; available online starting December 21 at NFB.ca**

French schools in the Northwest Territories and British Columbia are also in desperate need of resources. People here speak of the principle of equivalence and fairness and ask why French schools don't have the same resources and services as English schools. In 2005, the Association des parents ayants droit de Yellowknife decided to bring the matter to court. The group wanted a gymnasium built and the high-school wing expanded at the École Yellowknife. Roger Lepage was also involved in this case.

The eligibility of students has also become an issue. In 2008, the government of the Northwest Territories revoked the right of French schools to oversee admissions. The school board wants to admit children with francophone or Métis ancestors, as well as francophile anglophones, but for now the government is refusing.

In 2010, parents of students at the École Rose-des-Vents in Vancouver put pressure on the government to give their children access to the same infrastructure that their anglophone neighbours have. In 2014, the Supreme Court of Canada sided with the parents, offering fresh hope to francophones across the country. Also in 2010, the Conseil scolaire francophone de la Colombie-Britannique and the province's Fédération des parents francophones took legal action against the province to challenge the system in place for financing French schools in British Columbia. This mega-case is still before the courts.

## Facts about Canada's francophone population today

- The number of people who speak French only, or French and English, nearly doubled between 1951 and 2001. Outside of Quebec, a total of 2,439,040 people in Canada (10.8%) speak French.
- Since 1981, the number of people speaking French has grown by half a million.

- Today, Canada's francophone population numbers over 10 million, and has spread far beyond its original homes in Acadia and Quebec.
- With about 30 national organizations working in the fields of culture, education, economic development, health, and social services, Canada's francophones have created the tools they need to flourish.
- Minority francophones (outside Quebec) under the age of 14 are more likely to use French than those aged 65 or older.

### About the director

Anne-Marie Rocher has made and produced several websites and documentaries for her company, Productions Testa, including ***Droit comme un F*** and *Le correspondant du Grand Nord*. She has directed the documentaries *Gugging* (1996), *André Markowicz, la voix d'un traducteur* (1999), *Guy Rocher, Sociologist as Protagonist* (2002) and [Renaissance of the Island Acadians](#) (2004). From 2007 to 2012, she worked for the NFB's Ontario and West French Production Centre producing several documentaries, including [Front Lines](#) and [Le Royal 22e Régiment en Afghanistan](#) by Claude Guilmain, [A Monk's Secret](#) by Yves Étienne Massicotte, and [Courage](#) by Geoff Bowie.

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### Related products

Photo Gallery: <http://onf-nfb.gc.ca/en/press-room/photo-gallery/>  
 Electronic Press Kit: [The Fight for Francophone Rights](#)  
 Trailer click [here](#).

### Associated Links

[Groupe Média TFO](#)

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**About the NFB**

The National Film Board of Canada (NFB) creates groundbreaking [interactive works](#), social-issue documentaries and auteur animation. The NFB has produced over 13,000 productions and won over 5,000 awards, including 14 Canadian Screen Awards, 11 Webbys, 12 Oscars and more than 90 Genies. To access acclaimed NFB content, visit [NFB.ca](http://NFB.ca) or download its [apps](#) for smartphones, tablets and connected TV.