

## MINDS EYE ENTERTAINMENT SIGNS DEVELOPMENT DEAL WITH CBC TELEVISION TO PRODUCE FOUR HOUR MINI SERIES ON CANADIAN POLITICAL ICON, TOMMY DOUGLAS

- *Mini series will pay tribute to the five time Saskatchewan Premier, founding member and federal leader of the NDP and father of Medicare.*
- *Mini series directed by John N. Smith (*The Boys of St. Vincent, Random Passage*) and written by Bruce Smith (*The Sleep Room, The Investigation*).*
  - *Filming scheduled for summer 2004 in Saskatchewan and the Canada/Saskatchewan soundstage*

**October 2, 2003 – (Regina, SK) Minds Eye Entertainment** (formerly *Minds Eye Pictures*), has signed a development deal with CBC Television and has joined forces with creative consultant producer **Shirley Douglas** to produce a four-hour mini series on the life of Canadian political icon, Tommy Douglas.

Mr. Douglas is widely recognized as the father of socialized health care in Canada and leader of the first elected socialist government in North America. Directed by **John N. Smith** (*The Boys of St. Vincent, Random Passage*) and written by **Bruce Smith** (*The Sleep Room, The Investigation*), the mini series will begin production in Saskatchewan in summer 2004.

"The answers to the future must build on the strengths of the past," says creative consultant producer Shirley Douglas. "The Tommy Douglas story is very timely for Canada today."

"We are very pleased to be able to produce a story about a man whose compassion and conviction changed the course of Saskatchewan and Canadian history," says Kevin DeWalt, Minds Eye Entertainment President and C.E.O. "His remarkable accomplishments while in office make him a perfect subject for a mini series such as this."

"We are pleased and proud to be involved in this important project commemorating the life of one of the truly great Canadians," says Slawko Klymkiw, Executive Director of Network Programming for CBC Television. "This regional co-production with Minds Eye Entertainment, set in the part of the country Tommy Douglas knew and loved best, will be a tremendous tribute to his memory and the people of Saskatchewan."

### **About Tommy Douglas:**

Born in Scotland and raised in Winnipeg, **Tommy Douglas**, five-time Premier of Saskatchewan and first federal leader of the New Democratic Party (NDP), led the first elected socialist government in North America.

A former Baptist Minister, Tommy Douglas earned his Masters in Arts from McMaster University and carried out post-graduate work at the University of Chicago, where he was profoundly affected by the poverty and unemployment caused by the Great Depression. In 1935, he was elected leader of the Saskatchewan Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (CCF), where his government introduced the most widespread set of reforms in the history of Canada. In just the first three months of office, his government brought in over one hundred pieces of legislation.

These groundbreaking government reforms include: free hospital care; an end to foreclosing of farm mortgages; the Crown Corporations Act; the Saskatchewan Transportation Company; the Power Corporation; the Trade Union Act making collective bargaining mandatory – it made Saskatchewan's civil servants the first in the country to receive bargaining rights; free medical, hospital and dental services for old age pensioners; free cancer, tuberculosis and mental illness treatment; live broadcasts of the Legislature; lowering of the voting age to 18; the first no-fault auto insurance in North America; a government-operated air ambulance service; and a Bill of Rights. At the same time, Douglas' government reduced the provincial deficit by \$21 million, while increasing the budget to \$40 million from \$30 million.

After serving 17 years as Saskatchewan's premier, Douglas was elected as the federal leader of the NDP at their founding convention in 1961. Douglas served as leader until 1971, during which time the federal party increased its strength and popular support. Tommy Douglas passed away in 1986.

#### **About Shirley Douglas:**

Daughter of Irma and Tommy Douglas, **Shirley Douglas** was born in Weyburn, Saskatchewan in 1934. It was there Shirley witnessed the birth of Medicare and has since been determined that Canadians not lose what was so ferociously fought for. A graduate of the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art in London, Shirley performed on stage for the next decade and moved to Los Angeles where she was politically active in the anti-war and civil rights movements. Returning to Toronto, she resumed working as an actress in film, television and theatre, and has worked extensively on most of the regional main stages and cities in Canada. She was last seen on television in the series *Wind at My Back* on CBC. Shirley is actively involved with the Canadian Health Coalition and is the Chair of the Toronto Health Coalition. Shirley is to be invested with the Order of Canada later this year.

Established in 1986, **Minds Eye Entertainment** (*formerly Minds Eye Pictures*) is a dynamic and award winning film and television production company located in Regina, Saskatchewan. The Company's feature film *Falling Angels* had recently been invited to the Toronto International Film Festival where it was hailed as a "comic gem" by Maclean's. Minds Eye Entertainment is completing post-production on the feature film *Whitecoats* with Dave Thomas and the feature film *Seven Times Lucky* starring Kevin Pollak. The Company recently earned a record 10 Gemini nominations for the television movie *Betrayed*, the legal drama series *Just Cause*, the children's series *Mentors* and the teen series *2030CE*.

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