



BARBARA BUSH
HOUSTON LITERACY FOUNDATION

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**BARBARA BUSH HOUSTON LITERACY FOUNDATION ANNOUNCES
AUTHORS FOR 30TH ANNUAL *A CELEBRATION OF READING***

*Event to take place Tuesday, April 9 shining light on
First Lady Barbara Bush's literacy cause*

HOUSTON – The Barbara Bush Houston Literacy Foundation (Foundation) is pleased to reveal their full lineup of five prominent, bestselling authors for the 30th annual *A Celebration of Reading*, which will take place Tuesday, April 9, 2024 at The Hobby Center for the Performing Arts. The annual signature event is chaired by the organization's co-founders, Neil and Maria Bush. Children and grandchildren of President George H.W. Bush and First Lady Barbara Bush to serve as honorary co-chairs. All proceeds from *A Celebration of Reading* advance the Barbara Bush Houston Literacy Foundation's mission of improving lives through the power of literacy.

"Mom designed this event 30 years ago to shine the light on her cause of literacy and demonstrate to everyone that reading is joyful and a foundational skill for living the American Dream," said Neil Bush. "My wife, Maria, and I are deeply committed to carrying forth Mom's literacy legacy and my parent's longstanding commitment to the people of Houston, the city they called 'home' for more than five decades. The 2024 *A Celebration of Reading* will be an inspiring milestone event and a platform during which we will commemorate Dad's 100th birthday."

The official 2024 author lineup is:

- **Jean Becker**, who served as chief of staff for President George H.W. Bush for nearly twenty-five years. She is the editor of *Pearls of Wisdom* by Barbara Bush and author of the *New York Times* bestseller *The Man I Knew: The Amazing Story of George H.W. Bush's Post Presidency*. Becker's next book, *Character Matters: And Other Life Lessons from George H.W. Bush*, is set for release in April 2024. Prior to her post as chief of staff, Becker served as deputy press secretary to First Lady Barbara Bush and was a newspaper reporter for 10 years, including a four-year stint at *USA TODAY*.
- **Chris Bohjalian**, the #1 *New York Times* bestselling author of twenty-four books, including *The Lioness*, *Hour of the Witch*, *Midwives*, and *The Flight Attendant*, which has been made into a MAX limited series starring Kaley Cuoco. His other books include *The Red Lotus*, *The Guest Room; Close Your Eyes, Hold Hands; The Sandcastle Girls; Skeletons at the Feast; and The Double Bind*. His novels *Secrets of Eden*, *Midwives*, and *Past the Bleachers* were made into movies, and his work has been translated into more than thirty-five languages. Bohjalian is set to release his next book, called *The Princess of Las Vegas*, in March 2024.



- **Gary Gulman** is one of the most popular touring comics, selling out venues nationwide including Carnegie Hall. He is one of a select few comics to guest on every major late-night comedy program. Gulman's five comedy specials include HBO's *The Great Depresh*, a highly acclaimed look at mental illness and his new special, *Gary Gulman: Born on Third Base* which releases on MAX December 21st. In his latest special, Gulman hilariously chronicles his impoverished childhood on food stamps, free lunch and welfare checks while skewering our current Tale of Two Cities-esque wealth gap. In 2019 he appeared in the international blockbuster *Joker*, and he has a recurring role on the Hulu comedy series *Life & Beth*. A product of Boston, Gulman was previously a scholarship college football player, an accountant, and a high-school teacher. *Misfit: Growing up Awkward in the 80's* was released in September 2023 and is his first book.
- **Brad Taylor** is a *New York Times* bestselling author of 18 books and former special forces officer. He is most popularly known for his Pike Logan series, including *American Traitor*, *End of Days*, and *The Devil's Ransom*. *Dead Man's Hand*, released in 2024, is a gripping thriller in which Pike Logan goes head-to-head with Vladimir Putin. Brad retired from the U.S. Army Infantry and Special Forces as a Lieutenant Colonel after 21 years of service, including eight years with the 1st Special Forces Operational Detachment – Delta, commonly known as Delta Force. He served in Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom and as assistant professor of military science at The Citadel. Brad now consults on asymmetric threats for various agencies.
- **James McBride** is an award-winning, *New York Times* bestselling author of eight books including *Miracle at St. Anna*, *Song Yet Sung*, Oprah's Book Club selection *Deacon King Kong*, and, most recently, *The Heaven & Earth Grocery Store*. His landmark memoir, *The Color of Water*, spent more than two years on the *New York Times* bestseller list and is considered an American classic. *The Good Lord Bird* won the National Book Award for Fiction. McBride has been a staff writer for *The Boston Globe*, *People Magazine*, and *The Washington Post*, and is an accomplished musician and screenwriter. A recipient of a National Humanities Medal, McBride is also a distinguished writer in residence at New York University.

Proceeds from *A Celebration of Reading* advance the mission of the late First Lady Barbara Bush's legacy championed by the Barbara Bush Houston Literacy Foundation, as well as national efforts through the Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy of helping more children and adults realize their fullest potential in life and live the American Dream by learning how to read. Given the milestone 30th anniversary of the event, the Barbara Bush Houston Literacy Foundation set a goal to raise \$2 million.

"Thanks to our generous event sponsors, we have already raised \$1.5 million towards our \$2 million goal for the 30th annual event," said Julie Finck, Ph.D., President and CEO of the Barbara Bush Houston Literacy Foundation. "Over the years, proceeds from *A Celebration of Reading* have enabled the Foundation to develop and scale research-based literacy programs to address the childhood and adult literacy crisis that exists in our community. We look forward to another decade of difference making through the support of the Houston community."



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Phillips 66 will serve as the title sponsor of *A Celebration of Reading* for the ninth year in a row, continuing its leadership position in the community to promote the literacy cause. Kathrine McGovern/McGovern Foundation will serve as platinum sponsor. Marathon Oil Corporation, Enbridge Inc., ExxonMobil, H-E-B, Gail and Greg Garland, Tenenbaum Jewelers, Susan K. Bruch/The Joan and Marvin Kaplan Family Charitable Foundation, and the collaboration of Lisa and Mark Jakel, Scott Ulrich and Ernest Trevino, Kathy & Marty Goossen, and Brian and Rebecca Duncan will serve as gold sponsors.

Tickets and table sponsorships for the event are available for purchase on the Foundation's website at <https://www.barbarabushhouston.org/celebration>. For more information on *A Celebration of Reading*, call 346-212-2310 or email events@bushhoustonliteracy.org.

About the Barbara Bush Houston Literacy Foundation

The Barbara Bush Houston Literacy Foundation is a charitable organization formed by Neil and Maria Bush to carry forth First Lady Barbara Bush's legacy in the literacy cause and to focus deeply on breaking the intergenerational cycle of low literacy in the Bush family's hometown. Founded on Mrs. Bush's belief, "If you help a person to read, then their opportunities in life will be endless," the Barbara Bush Foundation's mission is to improve lives through the power of literacy. Over the past 10 years, the Foundation has spearheaded innovative literacy programs and expanded access to high-quality services and resources that empower children, families, and adults with the support they need to learn how to read, write, and comprehend. For more information, visit www.barbarabushhouston.org or follow us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/bushhoustonliteracy on Twitter [@bushhoustonlit](https://twitter.com/bushhoustonlit) and on Instagram [@bushhoustonlit](https://www.instagram.com/bushhoustonlit).