

# Literacy Partners Gala Honors Patricia Cornwell, Sherrie Westin, Barbara Tober and Sabastian Niles

*Event Raises \$1.3m to support life-changing literacy programs*

NEW YORK, NY, UNITED STATES, June 22, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Literacy Partners hosted its 2026 Evening of Readings & Gala Dinner at Pier Sixty, Chelsea Piers, bringing together New York's literary, philanthropic, civic and business leaders for a festive black-tie evening celebrating the power of literacy to change lives, which also marked the 40th anniversary of the gala, first held in 1986, by its founder, Liz Smith.

The annual gala hosted by award-winning journalist Lesley Stahl, supports Literacy Partners' mission to advance literacy two generations at a time, helping adults, parents and caregivers build the skills and confidence they need to create stronger futures for themselves and the children in their care. One of the highlights underscoring the importance of the work of the Charity was where a Literacy Partners student shared her journey from learning English to now helping other students increase their literacy skills. Thanks to Literacy Partners she is also pursuing a career in healthcare and her children are thriving in school.

## LITERACY PARTNERS

Literacy Partners Logo



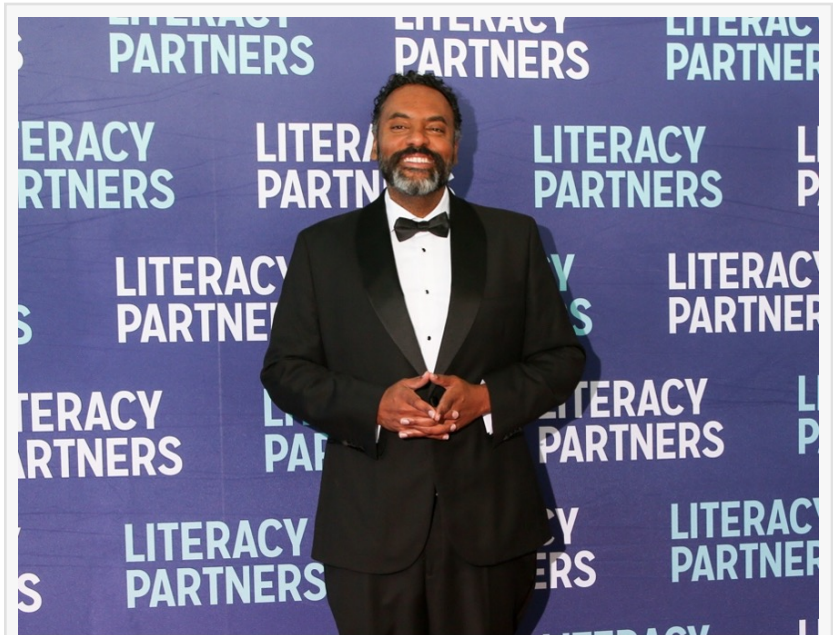
Patricia Cornwell (Photo Credit: BFA / Madeleine Thomas)

This year's gala honored four distinguished leaders whose work reflects the organization's commitment to education, storytelling, service and opportunity:

Patricia Cornwell, award-winning author, received the Lifetime Achievement Award. A pioneering figure in contemporary crime fiction, Cornwell has built an internationally acclaimed body of work that has captivated readers and helped define a genre. Sabastian Niles, president and chief legal officer of Salesforce, received the Distinguished Leadership in Literacy Award. Niles was recognized for leadership that reflects the importance of access, equity and opportunity in building stronger communities.

Barbara Tober received the Lizzie Award, recognizing her longtime commitment to culture, philanthropy and civic engagement. A patron of the arts, publishing maven, and lifelong New Yorker, Barbara Tober helmed BRIDES magazine as its Editor-in-Chief for over 30 years. The award is named in honor of Liz Smith. Sherrie Westin, president and CEO of Sesame Workshop, received the Champion of Literacy Award. Westin's work at the helm of the global nonprofit behind "Sesame Street" reflects a deep commitment to children's learning, early education and the lifelong value of literacy.

Commenting on the importance of the annual Gala Asaf Bar-Tura, Literacy Partners, CEO said, "This gathering, which celebrated remarkable literacy champions, demonstrated that when we come together, a better future is possible. Literacy is a gateway to social mobility and economic opportunity. The Literacy Partners community will continue to insist on a nation where everyone



Sabastian Niles (Photo Credit: BFA / Madeleine Thomas)



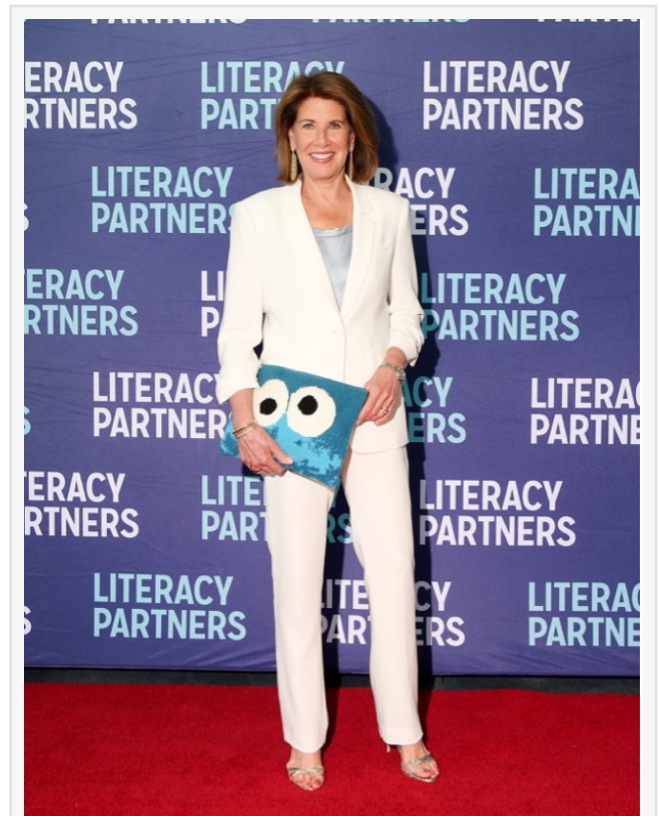
Barbara Tober (Photo Credit: BFA / Madeleine Thomas)

has the opportunity to read, work, engage, and thrive."

Notable Attendees included: Lesley Stahl, Patricia Cornwell, Sabastian Niles, Barbara Tober, Sherrie Westin, Asaf Bar-Tura, David Westin, Jean Shafiroff, Sheila Nevins, Perri Peltz, Courtney E.K. Lewis and Bill Buford.

About Literacy Partners:

Literacy Partners advances literacy two generations at a time, by supporting adults, parents, and caregivers in nurturing the literacy skills they and the children in their lives need to thrive. Literacy Partners research-based programs incorporate child development and parenting support to help parents and caregivers boost children's early reading, social emotional growth, and school readiness. Designed to arm every parent and caregiver with the necessary tools they need to create success for themselves and a better future for the children in their care, Literacy Partners' programs break the cycle of poverty, improve job prospects, and close the achievement gap for children before they even begin school.



Sherrie Westin (Photo Credit: BFA / Madeleine Thomas)

For more information, please visit: [www.literacypartners.org](http://www.literacypartners.org)

IG: @litpartners | FB: LiteracyPartners | Y: @Literacypartners | IN: LiteracyPartners

Norah Lawlor

Lawlor Media Group, Inc.

+1 212-967-6900

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