

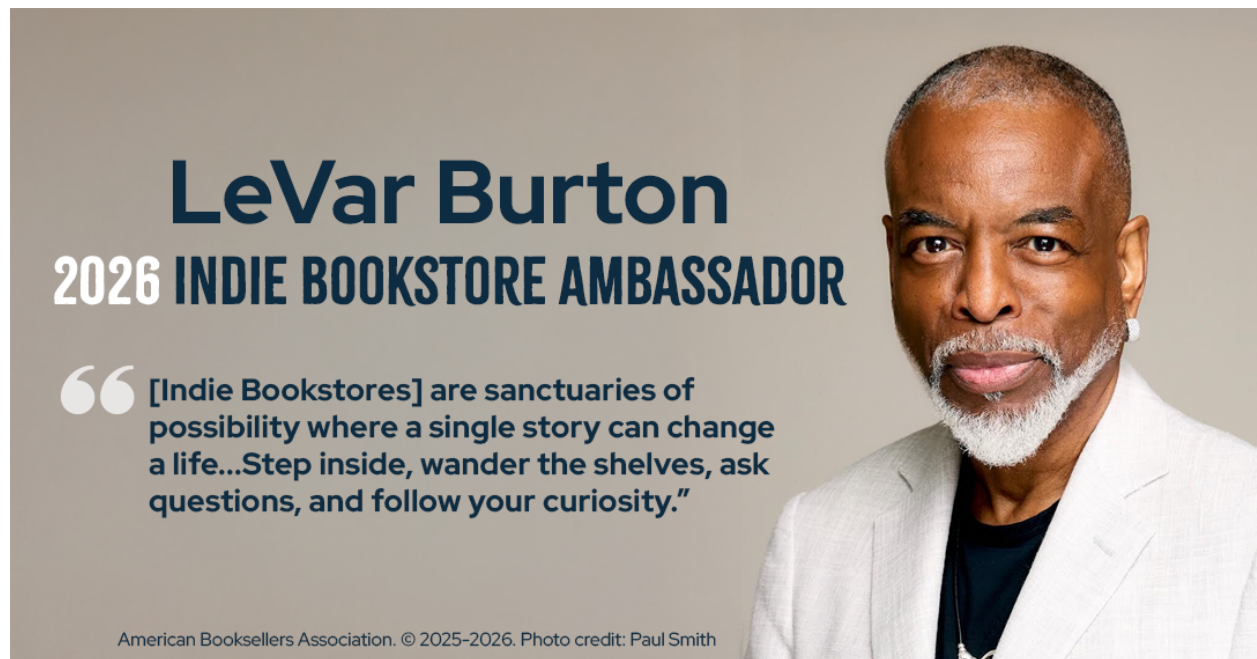
PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Harrison, NY — September 24, 2025

LeVar Burton Named Indie Bookstore Ambassador

Burton to champion indie bookstores and literacy for Indies First and Independent Bookstore Day



The American Booksellers Association (ABA) is thrilled to announce **LeVar Burton** as our Indie Bookstore Ambassador for 2025–2026. ABA launched the **Indie Bookstore Ambassador program** in 2022 to highlight independent bookstores year-round. From [Indies First](#) (Small Business Saturday, November 29) to [Independent Bookstore Day](#) (April 25, 2026), the Indie Bookstore Ambassador serves as a champion for independent bookstores. Previous ambassadors include Celeste Ng (2022–2023), Amanda Gorman (2023–2024), and Trevor Noah (2024–2025).

LeVar Burton is an actor, director, producer, and podcaster whose decades-long body of work includes *Roots*, *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, and *Reading Rainbow*. He is the honored recipient of seven NAACP Awards, a Peabody, a Grammy, and 15 Emmys, including a Lifetime Achievement Award at the Inaugural Children's & Family Emmys.

As a lifelong literacy advocate, Burton has dedicated decades to encouraging children to read. In 2023, Burton premiered his first documentary, *The Right to Read*, a film that positions the literacy crisis in America as a civil rights issue. *The Right to Read* was an official selection at the Santa Barbara International Film Festival and SXSW EDU.

Burton continues to exercise his passion for storytelling as the award-winning author of *Aftermath*, *The Rhino Who Swallowed a Storm*, and *A Kids Book About Imagination*. He launched his first book club with Fable, a digital book club community, and partnered with Masterclass, to share the power of storytelling.

His production company, LeVar Burton Entertainment (LBE), develops projects in the film, television, podcasting, and publishing space with the mission to share stories that foster empathy, champion diversity, and build community.

The enormously popular *LeVar Burton Reads* podcast has over 175 episodes in its catalog, boasting 25 million downloads. LBE's first Kids & Family podcast, *Sound Detectives*, debuted on Stitcher in July of 2023. Both podcasts are available wherever you get your podcasts.

As a pop culture icon, Burton has the unique ability to reach across all ages, ethnicities, and socioeconomic groups — communicating to a large fan base that is highly engaged and motivated to embrace his message.

In accepting the invitation to be the ambassador, Burton shared “It is an extraordinary honor to be chosen as ABA's Indie Bookstore Ambassador. From my earliest memories, books carried me beyond the world I knew. They let me explore distant planets, ancient kingdoms, and lives very different from my own. Independent bookstores are where those explorations began. They are sanctuaries of possibility where a single story can change a life. In my forthcoming book, I reflect on discovering and embracing one's authentic self. Bookstores offer that same opportunity to every reader. Step inside, wander the shelves, ask questions, and follow your curiosity. Every book you open is an invitation to imagine, to learn, and to see the world anew. But, you don't have to take my word for it!”

The first major independent bookstore event coming up for Burton as the Ambassador is **Indies First**. On Small Business Saturday (November 29) — a day dedicated to supporting the local businesses that help create jobs, boost the economy, and preserve neighborhoods — independent bookstores will host authors as honorary booksellers to celebrate Indies First, where they will help handsell their favorite titles, sign books, give readings, and more.

Indies First was created in 2013; other authors and celebrities who have spearheaded the campaign include Roxane Gay, Jason Reynolds, Dan Rather, Kate DiCamillo, Cheryl Strayed, and Lena Dunham. Fans can follow Indies First through IndieBound on [Facebook](#) and American Booksellers Association on [Instagram](#), as well as the hashtag #IndiesFirst, and search for their local bookstores on [IndieBound.org](#).

Inquiries about Indies First can be directed to indiesfirst@bookweb.org.

About the American Booksellers Association (www.BookWeb.org)

American Booksellers Association is a national trade association that supports and advocates for the success of independent bookstores. We provide members with education, networking

opportunities, advocacy, resources, and technology. In turn our members support local schools through book fairs, donations and author visits; promote literacy; provide inclusive community centers; connect readers and books; add character to neighborhoods; champion and center diverse and new voices; and contribute to the local economy. We feel honored to support over 3,200 independent bookstores in their work.

ABA is governed by a volunteer board that is elected by the membership. In addition to the Board of Directors service, members also serve on a number of advisory councils, including the ABA Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Council (DEIC) in support of ABA's commitment to antiracism, representation, equity, and access.