Born and educated in Germany, Eberhard F. M. Rees came to the United States in 1945 with the 120-member German rocketry team under contract to the U.S. Army at Fort Bliss, Texas. Shortly after his transfer to Redstone Arsenal in 1950, he became an American citizen.

For the following twenty-three years, Dr. Rees served in senior management positions with federal agencies near Huntsville, Alabama. During his tenure with the Army Ballistic Missile Agency, he provided technical guidance in the development of the Redstone, Jupiter, and Pershing missile systems and of the Jupiter-C launch vehicle, which orbited the United States' first satellite, Explorer I, on January 31, 1958. From 1960 to 1970, Dr. Rees served as deputy director for technical and scientific matters at the Marshall Space Flight Center, succeeding Hall of Fame inductee Dr. Wernher von Braun as director of the center in 1970.

Dr. Rees is most widely known for his role in the development, testing, and technical integrity of the Saturn family of launch vehicles, which carried men to the moon. The record of thirty-two consecutive Saturn launches (including nine lunar missions) without a single failure is unmatched today.

During the Saturn-Apollo era, the population of Huntsville increased eightfold, from 16 thousand in 1959 to 136 thousand in 1970. This led to expanded facilities and services for residents and to the formation of a large support community of aerospace contractors and high-tech industry in Huntsville's Research Park.

Dr. Rees had the difficult experience of serving the Army Ballistic Missile Agency—and the Marshall center in particular—during a period of fiscal and manpower reductions that presented new managerial challenges. Although many valued employees were lost, the center retained its capabilities in all disciplines and emerged from this period with renewed energy, a tribute to Dr. Rees's excellent leadership and engineering skills.

Dr. Rees's accomplishments have been described by his peers as issuing from his immense knowledge, unquestionable foresight, tireless initiative, dedication, and engineering excellence. His adroit management and direction of the Marshall Space Flight Center's intense research and development activities had a profound effect on America's space program. His contributions enhanced human kind's capability to explore space and pressed forward the application of space technology here on earth.

As with Dr. von Braun before him—and others after him—Dr. Rees has left a legacy of great dedication to humanity's shared dream of conquering space. Although Dr. Rees retired in 1973, he and his wife continue to make their home in the Huntsville community.