



Ennis Samuel Rees, Jr. was born on March 17, 1925, in Newport News, Virginia. After he graduated from the College of William and Mary with a B.A. degree in 1946, he earned his M.A. in 1948 and then his Ph.D. in comparative literature in 1951 at Harvard University.

After stints as a faculty member at Duke University and Princeton University, Rees began a long career at the University of South Carolina from 1954 to 1988.

Rees wrote over twenty books in his career, and more than a dozen of these were children's books. Although he was first acclaimed as a poet, the majority of his recognition can be credited to these tales. His appreciation of the ability to spread literature through playful language can be seen in many of his children's verses, such as *Teeny Tiny Duck and the Pretty Money* (1967), *Gillygalooos and Gollywhoppers* (1969), and *Fast Freddie Frog and other tongue-twister rhymes* (1993). Several of his colleagues described these works as reflections of Rees's own fun-loving yet scholarly nature.

Other examples of his educational writings are his translations of Homer's *The Odyssey* (1960) and *The Iliad* (1963), which earned him acknowledgment from many adults, especially college students. As a professor, he recognized that every translation is uniquely informative.

Even though Ennis Rees published only one book of poems, he became famous in South Carolina for his collection, *Selected Poems* (1973). During his time in South Carolina, he was considered a dedicated poet who combined his various interests in his poetry. For example, "Achilles and Patroclus," "The Bow of Odysseus," and "The Cyclops" are poems in his collection which feature his knowledge of classical mythology. Also, poems such as "The Wolf and the Crane" and "The Mouse and the Bull" reflect his interpretation of Aesop's fables.

Ennis Samuel Rees, Jr. was named the third South Carolina Poet Laureate, serving from 1984 to 1985. He died on March 24, 2009, at the age of eighty-four in Columbia, South Carolina.

-Sarah Marie Williamson

1999 Inductee to the South Carolina Academy of Authors



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Ennis Rees