

Estes Rockets Founder Vern Estes Selected for Induction into the National Aviation Hall of Fame

Vern Estes, whose pioneering work with wife Gleda inspired generations of rocketeers, joins the National Aviation Hall of Fame's Class of 2027.

PENROSE, CO, UNITED STATES, October 20, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Estes Industries is proud to announce that its founder, Vern Estes, has been selected for induction into the National Aviation Hall of Fame (NAHF) as a member of the Class of 2027.

An inventor, entrepreneur, and pioneer in model rocketry, Estes helped transform a specialized pursuit into an accessible hobby that has introduced millions to the science and excitement of powered flight.



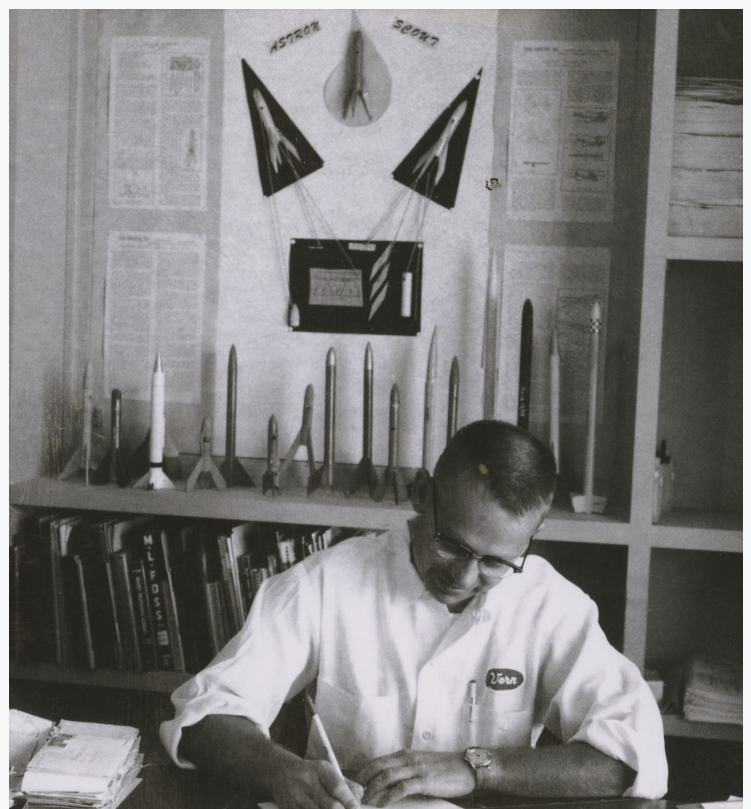
"To be recognized by the National Aviation Hall of Fame, alongside pioneers whose achievements helped shape the future of aerospace, is an incredible honor," said Vern Estes. "One of the greatest rewards of my life has been meeting people who tell me their first Estes rocket helped set them on a path toward a career in aviation, engineering, or space exploration.

"I have always believed that young people are inspired by using their own hands to build and create. The challenge of building a model rocket, followed by the excitement of flying and recovering it, is a reward hard to resist. If the work Gleda and I started all those years ago continues to inspire the next generation to reach a little higher, that's a legacy I am very proud of."

From a Small Workshop to a National Legacy:

In 1958, as America's fascination with the Space Age was taking flight, Vern and his wife, Gleda Estes, founded Estes Industries in Denver, Colorado. Among Vern's most significant innovations was "Mabel," an automated machine that made the mass production of safe, affordable model rocket engines possible, helping bring model rocketry within reach of families, schools, and enthusiasts across the country.

Gleda was equally essential to the company's success. Her leadership in business operations, customer relations, and fulfillment helped turn Vern's engineering breakthroughs into a thriving enterprise. Together, they built a company that would help define the hobby and inspire generations of future aerospace professionals.



Vern Estes in the early days of Estes Rockets

Estes Industries relocated to Penrose, Colorado, in 1961, where it continues to operate today.

Inspiring Generations to Reach Higher:

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Vern Estes

For more than six decades, model rocketry has served as a hands-on introduction to physics, engineering, and aerospace science. What began as a small family business helped establish an enduring educational tradition, giving generations of young people the opportunity to experience the excitement of flight and discover what they could accomplish through their own ingenuity.

"Vern Estes didn't just build a company. He helped create opportunities for generations of people to discover what

they were capable of achieving. His ingenuity, commitment to safety, and belief that everyone should have the opportunity to experience rocketry helped inspire countless future engineers, scientists, and aerospace professionals," said Mallory Langford, President of Estes Industries.

"We are extraordinarily proud to see Vern receive this recognition, and it is a privilege to carry forward the legacy he and Gleda built."

Vern will join the National Aviation Hall of Fame's Class of 2027, alongside individuals recognized

for their extraordinary contributions to aviation and aerospace. Details of the formal enshrinement ceremony will be announced by the National Aviation Hall of Fame.

About Vern Estes:

A pioneer in model rocketry, inventor, and entrepreneur, Vern Estes rose from humble beginnings in rural America to inspire generations through his innovative contributions to aerospace education. Undeterred by numerous obstacles, he founded Estes Industries in 1958 and went on to inspire millions of young people to pursue interests in science, engineering, aviation, and space exploration. His innovations helped establish model rocketry as a lasting educational tool and popularize a hobby that continues to influence future aerospace leaders today.

For a detailed and personal account of the challenges and triumphs Vern and Gleda faced in building their company, explore the recently released [Dear Mr. Estes](#), written by Vern Estes and Betty Estes Geer. The book chronicles the early years of Estes Industries and the development of modern model rocketry.

About Estes Industries:

Founded in 1958 by Vern and Gleda Estes, Estes Industries is a leading manufacturer of model rockets, engines, and accessories. Headquartered in Penrose, Colorado, Estes continues to make the excitement of rocketry accessible to students, educators, and enthusiasts through innovative products and hands-on educational experiences. Learn more at www.estesrockets.com

About the National Aviation Hall of Fame:

Founded in 1962, the National Aviation Hall of Fame is the nation's only Congressionally chartered aviation hall of fame, honoring individuals whose achievements have shaped aviation and aerospace history. For more information, visit www.nationalaviation.org.

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