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In August, 1975, a brand-new telescope operator arrived at a brand-new 4-m telescope on Cerro Tololo, as part of a crew commissioning what was then the largest telescope in the southern hemisphere. That young operator was Daniel Maturana, who is now stepping down after supporting observers at CTIO and SOAR for over four decades. The picture above shows the CTIO observer support group from those early days (Daniel on the far right).

Daniel worked at the 4-m - eventually named after director Victor Blanco - for over 25 years, until the advent of the SOAR Telescope on nearby Cerro Pachon required a core group of experienced operating staff. He was one of the people who transferred to SOAR, ensuring that this new 4-m telescope would always be in the hands of someone with the required judgment and experience. This faith in Daniel and his colleagues was fully justified in practice, as efficient operation of SOAR was ensured from the start.

Forty one years is a long time, though, and some of SOAR's current observers weren't even born when Daniel was already an experienced telescope operator - so he has decided it's time to leave, at the end of November. SOAR without Daniel will be a more than a little hard to imagine; those who have worked with him over the years may want to let him know they will miss him at the other end of the Skype connection when observing.

- *Jay Elias & Steve Heathcote*

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