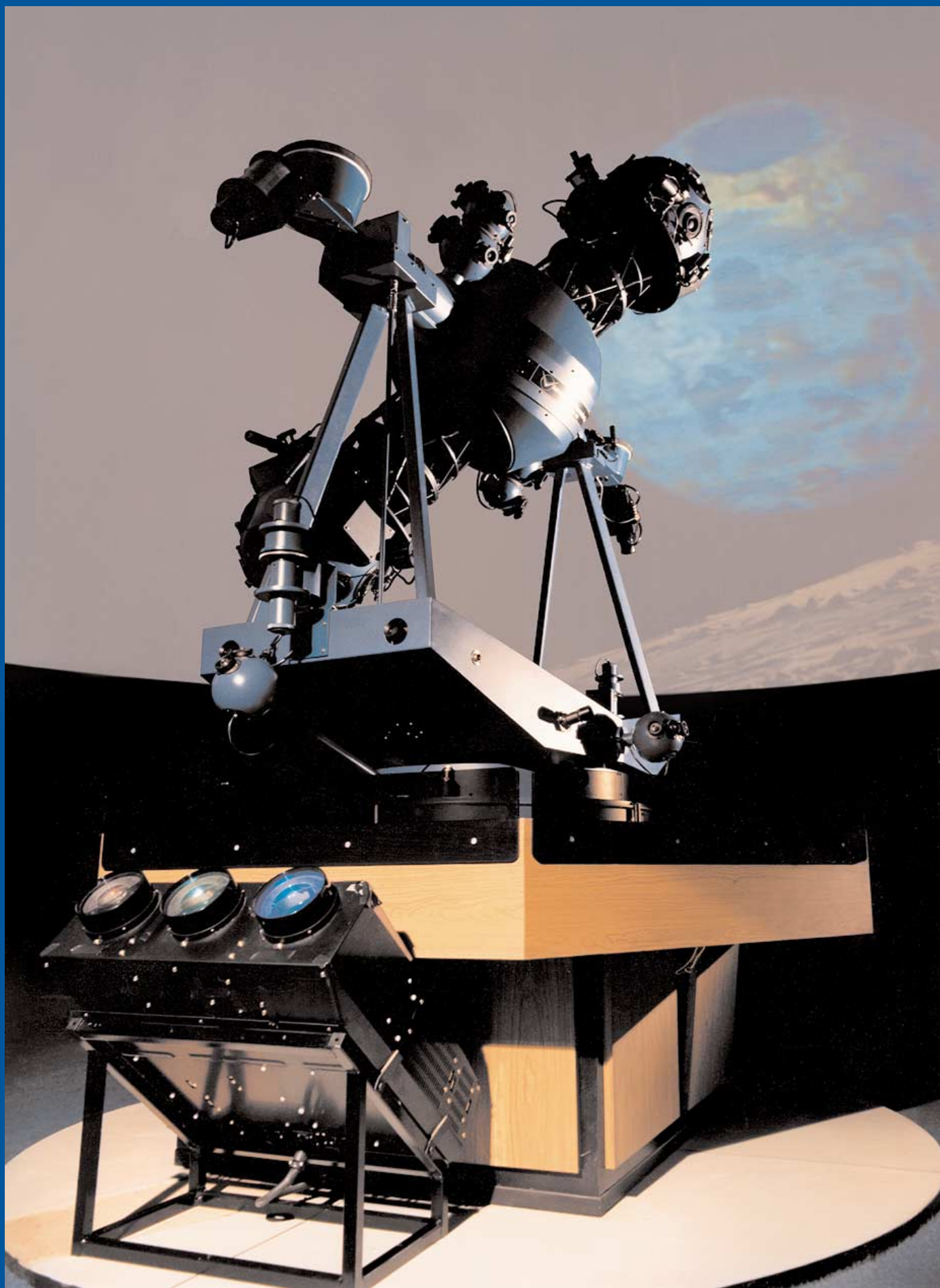


ARMAGH PLANETARIUM MAKES HISTORY

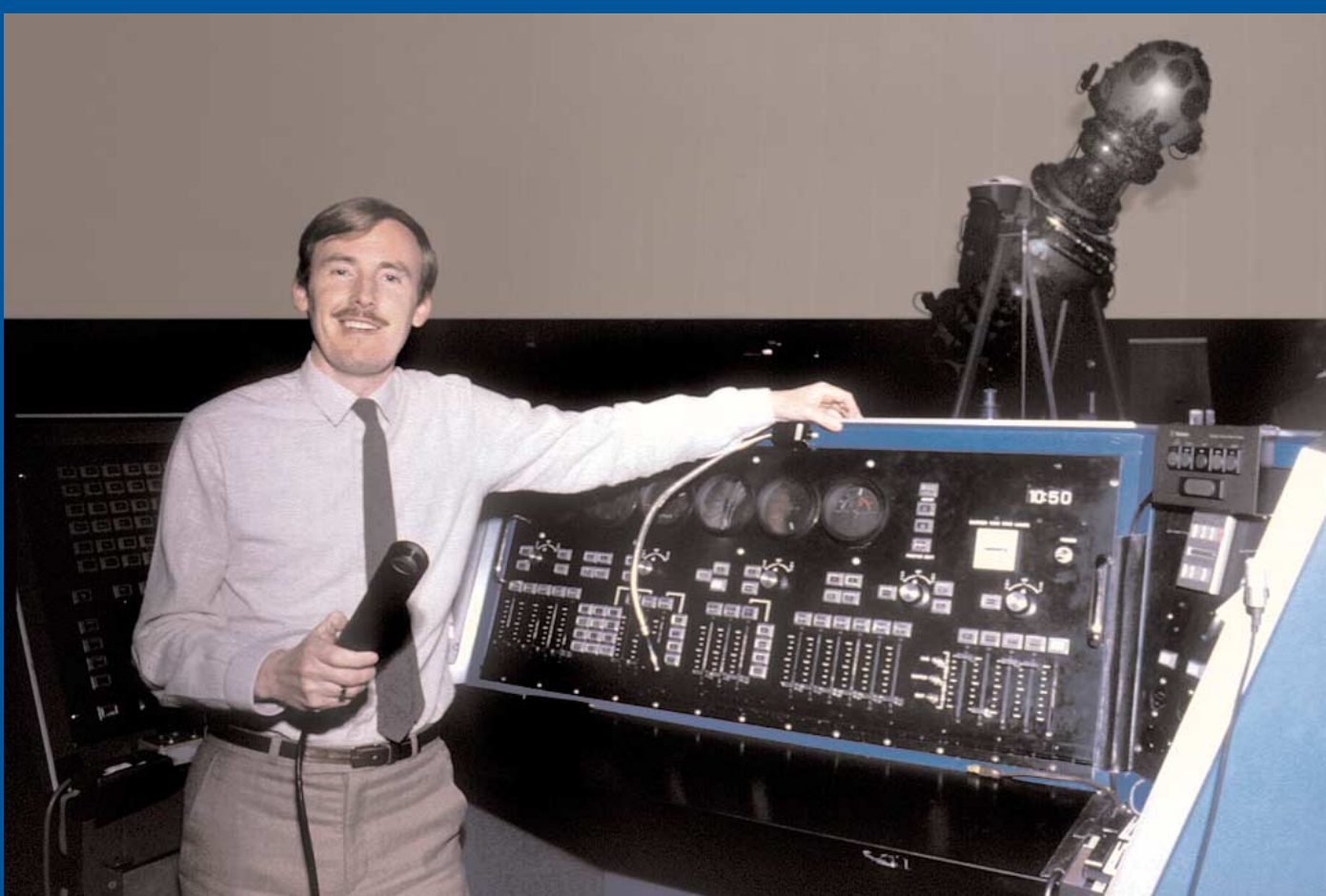
Armagh starts the video revolution



Our historic first video projection system mounted under the Viewlex-Minolta dumbbell projector: 1978

Under the directorship of Terence Murtagh, the team at Armagh was constantly introducing new technologies to enhance the audience's experience. Terence Murtagh recognised the possibility of exploiting the new technology of video projectors to provide the show's special effects, eliminating entirely the need for dozens of slide projectors.

Video tape recorders were very new and rare at this time and this research was very ambitious. Many technical hurdles stood in the way. Off-the-shelf video projectors were designed to present the image on a flat screen rather than a curved dome, so the Planetarium staff had to modify their projectors – otherwise the planets would look egg-shaped! At first the images appeared in grey boxes on the dome, totally spoiling the illusion. This problem was resolved by adding new electronic circuit boards to exaggerate the image's colour and brightness lowering the contrast until the objects appeared naturally surrounded by the inky blackness of space.



Director Terence Murtagh pictured at the Star Theatre console

This revolutionary development was a great success and Armagh Planetarium was the first planetarium in the world to project video on its dome. Other planetaria around the world followed our lead. The pioneering efforts at Armagh laid the foundations for the full-dome projection technology that was to become Digistar 3.