Margaret Stephens discovered a story in her own backyard. More accurately, she found a story in her modest Dallas apartment complex.

Ms. Stephens, a UNT graduate, is back in college as an undergraduate at 67, studying radio, television and film at the University of North Texas. At 6 p.m. Friday, the documentarian will premiere *Meenakshi 2000: The Story of Meenakshi Seshadri Mysore* at the university.

"I met her [Mysore] through her mother, Sundri," Ms. Stephens said, during a short break from editing the documentary. "She was staying with her daughter, Meenakshi, her husband, Harish, and their newborn daughter in the same apartment complex with me in Dallas."

Ms. Seshadri and Ms. Stephens saw each other in the mornings, when the American woman and her Indian neighbor would be out for aerobic walks. Ms. Stephens said her neighbor would do a little yoga and drink water on those mornings, and a friendship began.

That's when Ms. Stephens learned that she was living next door to a bona fide star. Meenakshi Seshadri Mysore was in more than 80 Bollywood films, Indian movies that are slick, commercial and often light and musical. Ms. Stephens said her neighbor would be as recognized on the streets of India as any young, beautiful American starlet would be in the states.

"She's recognized even here," Ms. Stephens said.

Ms. Stephen's documentary concentrates on Meenakshi's integration into American life, a feat that took the dancer and actress from the privilege of Bollywood to the relative anonymity of the Dallas-Fort Worth area. The actress began her professional life in 1981, when she was crowned Miss India. She has performed traditional Indian dance all over the world.

What coaxed the beloved starlet out of her celebrity lot?

"She fell in love with an Asian Indian man who is a citizen of the U.S. So it starts there and goes through this integration of her motherhood and being a wife," Ms. Stephens said.

The Hindu star brought her dance and choreography into the work, including a large dance number filmed in Dallas' Pioneer Plaza.

Ms. Mysore is a performing artist in the states, but embraces her domestic life, Ms. Stephens says.

The actress will attend the screening at UNT.

— Lucinda Breeding