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# Paper round that led to good news for boss

■ Building society chief wins top honour

■ She took over reins as temporary measure

**HELEN TITHER**

**B**USINESS boss Karen McCormick was the first woman to take charge of a building society for a decade.

Now her work at Macclesfield-based Cheshire Building Society has seen her named as one of the north west's most inspiring women at a glittering Manchester ceremony.

Karen, 51 - who started her working life on a newspaper round before working her way up to become a chief executive over the years - was one of four feisty females to win honours at the North West Inspiring Women Awards.

Nominated in the business category, after taking over the reins of the company in 2005 for what was planned as a temporary measure, she has become an influential and much-respected figure on the north west business scene.

However, as she picked up her prize from TV presenter Danny Wallace, of Test The Nation and Castaway, Karen said

she was impressed just to be nominated alongside such other awe-inspiring candidates.

She said at the event in the Midland Hotel: "To be in a room with so many other amazing people is just stunning."

"I'm surprised but obviously very pleased to have won."

"Events like this are great because they make you think what else you could do."

Wilmslow-based solicitor Hillary Meredith was another Manchester figure to be nominated for the same category, following her work representing injured soldiers and their widows against the Ministry of Defence.

Bolton-born Donna Hall also picked up an award for her work as chief executive of Chorley Council - where she has already been voted fifth top national executive in the country by her staff.

The Inspiring Woman in the arts prize went to Claire Moore, founder of Certain Curtain Theatre company in Preston.

A standing ovation went to campaigning mum Anne Parry, of Burnley.

Anne told how she has turned personal tragedy into a charity triumph.

After son Lewis, 21, committed suicide in 1994 she helped co-found self-help group PAPYRUS, where she still works, dedicated to preventing other young people taking their own lives.

**'Events like this make you think what else you could do'**

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» **TOP AWARD** Winner Karen McCormick said: 'To be in a room with so many other amazing people is just stunning'. Photograph Emma Williams