



Caroline Theobald. Picture credit: Simon Veit-Wilson.

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Champion of entrepreneurship is honoured by Northumbria University

Inspirational champion of entrepreneurship in the North East, and nationally-recognised figure in the business start-up community Caroline Theobald CBE has received an Honorary Doctorate of Civil Law from Northumbria University, Newcastle.

Born and raised in London, her first major role in business was as News Editor of Printing World the leading technical print magazine based in Fleet Street. After a stint as the late Robert Maxwell's press officer, she then turned to the

socially aware architectural movement of 1990s and co-founded Community Architecture Information Services (CAIS) Ltd.

In 1990 Caroline moved to the North East, and for the past three decades has made it her mission to mentor business leaders, build networks and forge national and international connections. And her efforts have contributed significantly to the success of North East enterprise.

She is the co-founder of dedicated business network group The Bridge Club set up to connect founders with funding, management advice and new markets and to stimulate enterprise thinking in schools, colleges and universities. For almost 25 years The Bridge Club has provided early-stage entrepreneurs with access to the money, management, skills, and markets they need to grow their businesses. *That work* led to another role as project lead for *Connect Northumberland*, building a community of Northumberland's employers to help the county transition to a vibrant post coal economy.

She is also a founding director of the North East Initiative on Business Ethics, a not-for-profit organisation that aims to make the North East a good place to do business.

Caroline is a committed advocate of gender equality. When she moved from London to the North East, she was deeply concerned by the gender imbalance she observed within the regional business community. Much later this encouraged her to become one of the founders of the Power of Women Campaign, *a community interest company dedicated to enhancing the aspirations of young women in the Tees Valley and beyond.*

She also became co-owner of enterprise training company, FIRST, which connects young people, start-ups, and professionals to their wider business community.

Caroline is a visiting professor at Northumbria and was Chair of the University's Newcastle Business School Advisory Board for five years from 2018 to 2023. She played a key role in supporting the Business School's Small Business Charter accreditation, which is a mark of excellence that recognises the role UK business schools play in supporting small businesses, student entrepreneurship and regional economic growth.

Caroline has also facilitated many of the University's connections with local businesses in her role as one of the founders of the Entrepreneurs' Forum – the largest network of entrepreneurs in the North East.

Speaking about her connections with the University and receiving her honorary degree, Caroline said: It's a privilege to be involved with a university that reaches into under-resourced communities to unlock people's hidden potential.–That's what excites me about the work I've done – making the connections that matter to help people get to be the best they can be. I'm humbled to have been honoured with this doctorate by an Institution that I so admire.

For 14 years Caroline was an honorary diplomat to the Swedish Government and continues to be Chair of the North East chapter of the Swedish Chamber of Commerce, which promotes the region as an inward investment destination for Swedish companies.

She was an associate of Teesside University and contributed to the UK2070 Commission Teesside Task Force. The Commission is an independent inquiry into city and regional inequalities in the UK and the Teesside Task Force has been set up to conduct a review of the policy and spatial issues related to the UK's long -term city and regional development.

In 2016 Caroline was awarded a CBE for services to business and entrepreneurship. She is also a lifetime holder of the Queen's Award for Enterprise for the work she does in harnessing the enterprising potential of young people, business owners and managers.

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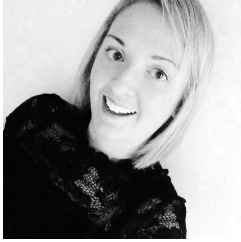


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