

Friends win cancer battle and top business award for lingerie

Team keeps abreast of underwear needs

After winning their battle against breast cancer, friends Fiona Wright and Bernice Fletcher had to face the difficult task of finding attractive yet practical post-surgery lingerie that was easily available on the high street.

So the inspirational women decided to do something about it – and launched their own company specialising in bras for women who have undergone breast surgery. Now the Willenhall duo – and their fellow business partner Cath Stone – have been recognised for their efforts after being named the regional winner of a prestigious business hero award.

Fiona, 46, Bernice, 52 and Cath, 46, are now in with a chance of scooping £13,000 as they go through to the national final of the 2008 Barclays Trading Places Awards.

The awards recognise people who have overcome personal adversity to make their business dreams a reality.

Fiona suffered a double blow from breast cancer as she was first diagnosed in 2005, only for it to return in

2007. Bernice was also diagnosed with breast cancer in 2005. They both underwent gruelling treatment and both had mastectomies.

Inserts

But following the surgery both discovered how difficult it was to find attractive and practical bras that can securely hold prosthetic inserts.

Spotting a gap in the market, they exhibited at Clothes Show Live at the NEC in December and

opened their own retail outlet, Lingerie Illusions, in West Midlands House in Willenhall at the start of this year.

“We are thrilled to be recognised by this award and very excited about making it through to the final,” said Cath.

“We know from the level of interest we’ve had from women that there certainly was a need for this type of service,” she said.

Barclays marketing director for local business

John Davis, a judge on the panel, said: “The Trading Places Awards honour unsung heroes who, in spite of disadvantages or personal challenges, have taken steps to grow their own sustainable business and in doing so have transformed their prospects for the better.”



Bernice Fletcher, Fiona Wright and Cath Stone celebrate winning the award