

QUOTE: 'MINORITIES KNOW THEY CANNOT AFFORD TO OPERATE AT THE C LEVEL.'

— Keith R. Wyche in his new book "Good Is Not Enough: And Other Unwritten Rules For Minority Professionals"



Adam Katz turned his lifelong love of flying into a fleet of charter jets on Long Island.

(Dante Maestre)

Chartered course

Leaving real estate for a life in the sky

By **Karen Tina Harrison**
Special to amNewYork

The big career switch
From real estate management to aviation

Who pulled it off?
Adam Katz, 49, owns Talon Air, a fleet of 19 private jets for charter, based at Republic Airport on Long Island.

What was his old job?
Katz, a Great Neck native and Adelphi grad who also holds a law degree from St. John's, worked for his family's real estate firm for 16 years, building and managing apartments.

180°

The art of changing paths

Why he did a 180°
"I was that little kid with the model airplanes who the pilots would let sit in the cockpit. I got my own pilot's license right after my driver's license. I liked the real estate business, but my heart was in aviation. ... I thought there was a market for on-demand deluxe chartered jets and started Talon Air in '01."

What does an airline boss do?

"I'm very hands-on. I meet with Talon's 40 pilots, our crews, our clients and our board. I oversee safety and compliance, sales and marketing, finance and strategic development. I plan our custom routes and check out new aircraft and services. And I'm a pilot in full flight rotation, too."

What does an airline boss need?

"You must know the aviation industry and have a vision for its future. You need financial savvy and a flair for promotion. And

you must understand the luxury customer and be ultra-committed to service, because flying isn't just a way to get somewhere. It can be a thrilling adventure."

How's the dough?

"Talon Air provides a good income, but for me, this job is about living my dream. And I get to fly my own jets whenever and wherever I want."

What should you know?

"I learned that if you focus all your energy, creativity and passion, you can fulfill your own dream. Never give up! I can tell you, the sky's the limit."