



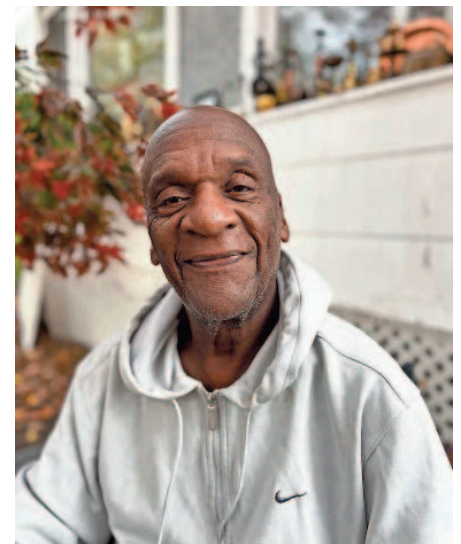
Some of Michael Flood Sr.'s artwork may have served a different purpose before finding a spot in his gallery.

DIGGING IT!

Meet the Rochester man who dug in the ground to convert his home into a must-see art gallery

Justice Marbury Rochester Democrat and Chronicle | USA TODAY NETWORK

Strolling down Virginia Avenue in the 19th Ward, you might catch the gentle sound of wind chimes mingling with the glimmer of brass and copper atop a unique, homegrown art gallery. • Michael Flood Sr., 68, set out to make his house a standout on his street. • Noticing that many homes around him had nearly identical fences and front yards, he found inspiration in the eclectic streets of New York City. **See FLOOD, Page 4D**



Michael Flood Sr. PHOTOS BY JUSTICE MARBURY/ROCHESTER DEMOCRAT AND CHRONICLE

Flood

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"I'm inspired by New York City because they have a lot of different things," Flood said. "In Harlem, the front of people's houses has some of everything — one of this here and one of that there."

After retiring, Flood carefully mapped out his design and took essential steps, such as contacting the city to confirm no waterlines were running through his yard. He spent four months excavating tons of dirt with the permit and began building his vision.

Most of the artwork in his collection has come from Goodwill, though occasionally, people donate pieces for him to display. The gallery features paintings, brass and copper pieces, glasswork, ceramics and more, with artwork arranged along each side of the space.

Some of Flood's artwork is unconventional or may have served a different purpose before finding a spot in his gallery. Holding up a brass pan shaped like a flower, he explained, "I like the look of brass; to me, this is a piece of artwork. It's also good for outside because it doesn't rot or rust over."

Though Flood has lived on Virginia Avenue for 35 years, the gallery has only been open for a year. He plans to keep it up through all seasons, occasionally rotating pieces and adding new finds.

"I feel good when I hear people outside, and they're hanging out, every once in a while, having fun and taking pictures," he said. "No one ever touches anything. When I see them, the kids say they feel something when they come by. People like it, and I'm glad they do."

As a Rochester native, Justice Marbury entered the world of journalism to create work where voices like hers were



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heard—the voices of minority communities. Marbury covers small businesses, neighborhood concerns, and the interesting people who live in Rochester's

19th Ward. As the 19th Ward reporter, she has helped implement community outreach ideas by asking what people in various communities want to read

about themselves in addition to regular news. Contact her on Instagram @justice_marbury and by email at jmarbury@gannett.com.