

## Wild About Harry's files for bankruptcy

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By KAREN ROBINSON-JACOBS / The Dallas Morning News

Wild About Harry's Inc. has filed for bankruptcy protection – in part to get out from under a debt owed to noted restaurateur Phil Romano.

The Dallas company, which operates a popular hot dog and frozen custard restaurant, listed debts of more than \$1 million and assets of less than \$500,000 in the Chapter 11 filing June 2. Among the largest creditors is Mr. Romano, who was originally owed more than \$500,000 from a failed business venture with restaurant owner Harry M. Coley.

As part of the bankruptcy, Mr. Coley hopes to not only avoid paying back the roughly \$400,000 in debt remaining but also to recoup the \$100,000 paid to date, his attorneys said Tuesday. Mr. Coley could not be reached for comment.

Mr. Romano, who created such concepts as Romano's Macaroni Grill, Fuddruckers and Eatzi's, said Mr. Coley was at least six months behind on his payments.

"I had no choice," but to push the matter, said Mr. Romano.

In 1999, about a year after the first Harry's restaurant opened, Mr. Coley and Mr. Romano formed a separate company called WAHI Inc. to expand the concept beyond the original Knox Street location.

But the only two retail outlets opened as part of that deal floundered and eventually closed.

After Mr. Romano sued to recoup some of his \$1 million investment, Mr. Coley, the Knox Street restaurant and WAHI agreed to pay Mr. Romano \$517,500, according to a motion filed in the case.

Stephanie D. Curtis, Mr. Coley's attorney, said the company plans to argue that the Knox Street restaurant should never have been liable for the debts of the partnership.

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