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# Lawyers: James Brown legal battle appears nearing an end

By Katrina A. Goggins, Associated Press Writer

COLUMBIA, S.C. — James Brown's children, the woman who says she's his last wife, and the state of South Carolina are nearing a settlement over the late soul singer's estate, attorneys involved with the case said Wednesday.

The agreement also appears to include an inheritance for 6-year-old James Brown II, whose connection to the music legend had been questioned by trustees of the singer's estate, said a lawyer for the boy, who took a DNA test in April.

"We're pleased," said attorney Peter Shahid. "It answers any questions we have as to whether or not he will receive anything and what share he should receive."

He said the settlement is "a very positive agreement" for his client and everyone else involved.

The issues at stake include the singer's trust fund for poor children, his estate, the legality of his last marriage and splitting up his possessions, including his lavish Beech Island home. Major factors also include the rights to the music and image of Brown, who died on Christmas Day 2006. The total value of Brown's assets has not been made public.

"It will settle a lot of the issues that are in dispute," said Louis Levenson, an attorney for some of Brown's adult children. "There are people who may wish to continue."

Levenson said most of the people involved are interested in working together to "enhance the value of the estate rather than tear it down."

Several attorneys declined to give details about the plan, citing a judge's request they keep details confidential.

Robert Rosen, the lawyer for Tomi Rae Hynie, the mother of James Brown II who also goes by Tomi Rae Brown, said in an e-mail to The Associated Press that an agreement has been reached by "the main parties" in the case, but that it does not include lawsuits and claims by creditors.

The settlement also was mentioned during a court hearing Tuesday in Aiken when an attorney for the state of South Carolina said about 90% of issues in the case have been resolved.

Mark Plowden, a spokesman for the South Carolina Attorney General's office, said final details are still being worked out. "The remainder of all that is under confidentiality until such times as we report back to the judge with a full settlement," he said.

Meanwhile, a man who claims to be Brown's half brother said Wednesday he'll undergo a DNA test this week to prove it.

Kevin Jones, 51, of Natchitoches Parish, La., said Wednesday that Brown knew about their connection before his death but the two never met.

Jones, who attended the hearing Tuesday, said he didn't come forward before Brown's death because he didn't want to embarrass the singer.

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