June 4, 1986

Dearest Mrs. Rubinstein,

I thought you might like to have the N.Y. Times and the Post articles on the final settlement - although I'm sure you know by now how everything turned out. I was amazed at the amounts (Post) the "poor children" are worth! And I feel sorry that the Times seemed to blame Mrs. Zagata re the medical experts. (Do you know whether Mrs. Johnson ever went ahead with remodelling the kitchen?)

...my husband does seem to be improving, despite some pain last night. He is still in traction, but if he keeps getting better he can leave the hospital Saturday, but will have to take it easy for quite a while, and wear a brace for a couple of months. So, all in all, it could have been much worse...and he thanks you for your concern and good wishes. (A terrible room mate - won't have the air conditioning on, sleeps almost all day, and coughs/grunts/talks all night.) But the important thing is the daily improving. And visitors and calls cheer him up.

A terribly hot weekend, and now down to 50. As Eva says, one has to dress like an onion.

Love, always, always,
'V' FOR VICTORY

Johnson's widow gets $340M in estate fight

A SETTLEMENT was reached yesterday in the fierce battle over the $500 million estate of J. Seward Johnson Sr. — leaving his widow with $340 million.

His six children and the oceanographic institute he founded will share the rest.

"I feel sorry that they [the children] brought this court action. They ridiculed their father," said Barbara Plasecka Johnson, 49, Johnson's third wife.

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The out-of-court settlement — which also leaves the Internal Revenue Service a giant winner — came just before the case was to have gone before a jury to Manhattan Supreme Court.

Mrs. Johnson, a former maid in the Johnson household, had vowed during the trial she would never settle, "as a matter of principle.

She said after the agreement was announced:

"I changed my mind. Peace is better than prolonged litigation."

According to terms of the settlement:

By HAL DAVIS

- Eldest son Seward Jr. will get an extra $7 million — representing fees he would have received as co-executor of his father's estate.
- Harbor Branch Foundation, Johnson's pet charity, gets $20 million.
- New York Post, Harold Schonberg

- Mrs. Johnson keeps some $340 million, including a mansion in New Jersey and an island in the Bahamas.

Johnson's son, Seward Jr., of a founder of the drug firm, died of cancer at 47 in 1983, at his Florida home.

In his will, signed April 14, 1983, he left nearly his entire fortune to Mrs. Johnson, his third wife.

She is a Polish immigrant who arrived in the U.S. in 1988 as an art student with only $100 and was hired as a maid by Johnson's second wife.

She now owns the $25 million, 165-acre estate in Princeton, N.J., that she calls "Jama Polanka," — Polish for "Beautiful Glade" — which is stocked with tens of millions of dollars worth of art and antiques.

The children charged that the will was a fraud and that Mrs. Johnson was a money-hungry "shrew" who had terrorized a sick, senile, old man into leaving her all his money.

The children, who have fortunes of their own ranging from about $23 million to more than $10 million, went to court to break the will.

The present, Seward Jr., 56, is already worth $24 million, and the wealthiest, youngest daughter Jennifer, 45, is worth $100 million.

Johnson had cut his children out of some $30 million and codicils starting back in the mid-1980s.

He said he was disinheriting them, "not for any lack of affection for them," but because he established huge trusts for them in 1984.


3 toys ordered recalled

WASHINGTON — The government issued a civil complaint against Johnson & Johnson Baby Products Co. yesterday, seeking a recall of three soft crib toys which the agency says could prove dangerous to small children.

Two youngsters have strangled on one version of the toys, the Consumer Product Safety Commission charged.

It wants a recall of all three types — Soft Triplet, Piglet Crib Gym and Triplet Marching Band.

LADIES, THE SALE OF THE YEAR!!!
LUPU'S FAMOUS DISCOUNT
PRICES SLASHED IN HALF

Lupu's IN BROOKLYN

FAMOUS CLOSING FOR
THE SUMMER SALE
ENTIRE STOCK
1/2 PRICE

THOUSANDS OF SPRING & SUMMER
CURRENT DESIGNER SPORTSWEAR & DRESSES
SIZE: 4-6-8-10-12-14-16

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(Some Special Purchase)
On How to Split Johnson Estate

Continued From Page A1

tion, an oceanographic institute that Mr. Johnson helped found, will receive $20 million subject to Internal Revenue Service approval.

In addition, Mrs. Johnson will pay the children’s legal fees, which are said to amount to almost $10 million. J. Seward Johnson Jr., one of the sons, will receive an additional $7 million instead of a fee as an executor of the will. About $80 million will go to the government for taxes.

The settlement was approved by a 4-1 P.M. by Surrogate Marie M. Lambert. A tentative agreement reached late Friday night had come close to collapsing Sunday. It was saved in a 4:30 a.m. session and signed by all parties at 11:15 A.M. yesterday, bringing to a close the battle over what was called the largest will ever probated in New York.

Almost until the end of the trial, both sides insisted there would be no settlement. Four weeks ago, Mrs. Johnson’s lawyer, the family, was Edward J. Reilly, attorney for the family, and Donald Christ, attorney for Barbara Plasseka Johnson, in white dress. To her right was Nita S. Zagat, trust lawyer. The family members were, clockwise from right, Clinton Weld, Mary Richards, Jennifer Johnson, Dr. Keith Weld, Joyce Johnson, James Johnson, Diana Firestone and J. Seward Johnson Jr., center. On the bench was Surrogate Marie M. Lambert.

Manhattan Surrogate Court as the settlement was announced in the J. Seward Johnson estate case. At left was Edward J. Reilly, attorney for the family, and Donald Christ, attorney for Barbara Plasseka Johnson, in white dress. To her right was Nita S. Zagat, trust lawyer. The family members were, clockwise from right, Clinton Weld, Mary Richards, Jennifer Johnson, Dr. Keith Weld, Joyce Johnson, James Johnson, Diana Firestone and J. Seward Johnson Jr., center. On the bench was Surrogate Marie M. Lambert.

Harvey Korn, said the judge had received three telephone threats after workers on the Johnson’s New Jersey estate had entered the courtroom and shouted insults at a former employee who was testifying against Mrs. Johnson. Judge Lambert fined the intruders, most of whom were Polish immigrants. Asked if the callers were Polish, Mr. Korn said, “They had Eastern European accents.”

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After I heard the testimony of Nita S. Zagat,” said Joe Santana, “she did most of the damage to Mrs. Johnson’s case.”

“The medical evidence showed he was disturbed,” said Rosa Hurbide.

“And Mrs. Johnson’s medical experts did more to help the children than they did her.”

Mrs. Johnson said she settled out of court because “peace is more important than a long litigation.”

In fact, had the trial gone to the jury, there was every possibility that litigation could have continued for years. Each side insisted throughout the trial that it would appeal any victory by the other side.

In dismissing the case, Surrogate Lambert disclosed that she had received threats against her life during the trial. Later, her law secretary,

23 Witnesses Called

The trial, which began last February, followed almost two years of deposition and legal preparation. So far, 75 witnesses were called and 15,800 pages of testimony taken. The court battle centered on a simple point: whether J. Seward Johnson was mentally competent when he signed his final will on April 14, 1983.

Edward J. Reilly of Milbank, Tweed, Hadley and McCloy, lead attorney for the children, presented 35 witnesses, including nurses and former employees of the Johnsons, who said the elderly millionaire was hallucinating and disoriented when he signed the will.

Donald Christ of Sullivan & Cromwell, who headed Mrs. Johnson’s lawyers, presented 35 witnesses who asserted that the Johnsons were a loving, caring couple throughout their 12-year marriage and that Mr. Johnson had been alert and mentally sound until a day or two before he died.

Most of the jurors questioned after they were dismissed indicated they had favored the children.

“I basically had my mind made up
ACCORD REACHED ON JOHNSON WILL

Widow to Provide $160 Million to Children and Foundation

By FRANK J. PRIAL

The four-month court battle over the will of the late J. Seward Johnson ended yesterday in an out-of-court settlement that will require his widow to pay out $160 million of the $500 million estate.

The agreement was put together in a week of marathon negotiations behind the scenes by lawyers for all the parties. It came four days after the end of arguments in a trial in which Mr. Johnson’s children by two previous marriages and an oceanographic foundation contended that Mr. Johnson had been ill and incompetent when he was “terrorized” into signing a will that left the entire estate to his widow.

Contrasting Portraits

During the bitter battle in Manhattan Surrogate’s Court, the children’s attorneys portrayed Mr. Johnson’s widow, Barbara Piasecka Johnson, as a shrew who screamed insults at her disoriented husband and ordered him about like a small child. Mrs. Johnson’s attorneys portrayed her stepchildren as greedy and cruel and the Johnsons as a loving couple.

Under the settlement, Mrs. Johnson, a Polish immigrant and former chambermaid in his home who was 42 years his junior, will keep more than $300 million of the estate. Mr. Johnson was an heir to the vast Johnson & Johnson pharmaceutical fortune.

Of the $160 million to be paid out, Mr. Johnson’s six children will receive about $42.5 million to divide as they choose. The Harbor Branch Founda-

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