GOP chairwoman and state treasurer Judy Barr Topinka. "Obama gets national attention because he's a very personable fellow, very charming, very skilled....He has the advantage of having worked in the legislature, which Jack has not done, but Jack has had business experience that Obama has not."

Nonpartisan analyst Christopher Mooney, executive director of the Institute for Legislative Studies at the University of Illinois-Springfield, says, "Ryan is a very attractive candidate in the sense that he's got this good story, he's young, he's good-looking, he's energetic, he's made millions, and he's pitched in a little public service in the inner city—it gives him a patina of holiness, all that good stuff." On the minus side, he adds, Ryan is a first-time candidate debuting in a particularly high-profile race. As for Obama, "he's really, really smart, he's a very good speaker, and he has a compelling story, too," Mooney says. "He oozes empathy."

Scott Turow says he's most impressed by Obama's "penetrating intelligence, a kind of princely dignity—not arrogant at all, but serenely composed—and exceptional candor. If he can keep the last trait intact in today's American political scene, he will be a rare figure indeed."

Melissa Harris-Lacewell, a political scientist at the University of Chicago, sees even greater potential for the Democratic candidate. "If Obama is elected, overnight he will become the single most important African-American elected official in the country," she asserts. Because the Senate is smaller than the House of Representatives, she says, Obama would be more visible and likely to receive immediate appointment to important committees.

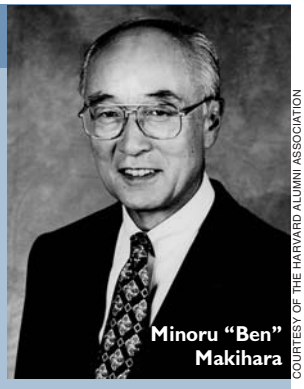
Republicans are likely to outspend Democrats in contesting the seat. "Illinois is tough for Republicans, but Jack Ryan offers us a good opportunity this year," says NRSC committee spokesman Dan Allen. "He brings a unique perspective to the education issue and has very strong views on taxes."

Earlier this year, many observers said the race was Obama's to lose, and polls in early June showed him leading Ryan by 22 points. But the Republicans aren't conceding anything: Ryan has pledged that he will match every dollar donated to his campaign with 50 cents from his own pocket. So even though Yale seems assured of the presidency, Harvard appears to have at least one Senate seat wrapped up.

~NANCY DAY

Nancy Day, Nf '79, chairs the journalism department at Columbia College Chicago. Previously a journalism professor at Boston University, she has covered government and politics for more than three decades.

Harvard Medalists



COURTESY OF THE HARVARD ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

Minoru "Ben" Makihara

Three alumni, each "represent[ing] the best of our broad community" according to the Board of Overseers and the HAA's Alumni Awards Committee, received the Harvard Medal during Commencement week in recognition of their outstanding service to the University.

President Summers presented the first medal on Monday, June 7, at the fiftieth-reunion dinner, to class member **Minoru "Ben" Makihara** '54, AMP '77, senior corporate adviser and former chairman and president of Mitsubishi Corporation, a John Harvard Fellow who is active in University and alumni affairs in Japan and the United States. The honorary citation read by the president noted: *Global businessman and son of Harvard, you have built bridges of international understanding by your example, serving as governor of the Harvard Club of Japan, chair of the Harvard Campaign in Japan, and advisor to the Harvard Asia Center, your valued commitment to this University firmly rooted in principle and in practice.*

The president conferred the other medals, as usual, during the HAA's annual meeting on June 10.

Of **William J. Cleary Jr.** '56, who holds or shares seven University hockey records, played on the gold-medal 1960 U.S. Olympic hockey team, and is the only Harvard athlete whose number has been retired, he proclaimed: *Harvard's all-American Olympian, you have for more than 50 years put your many skills into play for Harvard as a student athlete, coach of the Harvard men's ice-hockey team, and director of athletics, leading the Crimson to an NCAA championship while inspiring in us a love of healthy competition.*

JIM HARRISON

Joan Morthland Hutchins and William J. Cleary Jr.

To **Joan Morthland Hutchins** '61, president and CEO of Compotite Corporation of Los Angeles and president of MBH Farms Incorporated in Elizaville, New York, who has held many alumni leadership positions, the president declared: *Volunteer par excellence, as president of the Board of Overseers, president of the Harvard-Radcliffe Club of Long Island, and director of the Harvard Alumni Association, you have served Harvard and Radcliffe from coast to coast, your energetic leadership marked by extraordinary commitment and competence.*

The HAA Awards Committee invites nominations for candidates for Harvard Medals (which honor extraordinary contributions in teaching, administration, leadership, fundraising, and other areas) and HAA Alumni Awards. Send a letter with the nominee's résumé and other supporting materials to Andy Hoffrichter, Office of Alumni Relations and Research, Harvard Alumni Association, 124 Mount Auburn Street, sixth floor, Cambridge 02138, or go to www.haa.harvard.edu (click "About the HAA," then "Boards").