

STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN BENEFICIAL OWNERSHIP

() Check this box if no longer subject to Section 16.
 Form 4 or Form 5 obligations may continue. See Instructions 1(b).

1. Name and Address of Reporting Person
 BRACKEN, FRANK A.
 5150 PLANTATION DRIVE
 INDIANAPOLIS, IN 46250
2. Issuer Name and Ticker or Trading Symbol
 FIRST MERCHANTS CORPORATION
 FRME
3. IRS or Social Security Number of Reporting Person (Voluntary)
 ###-##-####
4. Statement for Month/Year
 December 31, 1997
5. If Amendment, Date of Original (Month/Year)
6. Relationship of Reporting Person(s) to Issuer (Check all applicable)
 (X) Director () 10% Owner () Officer (give title below) () Other
 (specify below)
7. Individual or Joint/Group Filing (Check Applicable Line)
 (X) Form filed by One Reporting Person
 () Form filed by More than One Reporting Person

Table I -- Non-Derivative Securities Acquired, Disposed of, or Beneficially Owned

1. Title of Security	2. Transaction Date	3. Transaction Code	4. Securities Acquired (A) or Disposed of (D) Amount	5. Price	6. Amount of Securities Beneficially Owned at End of Month	7. Nature of Indirect Beneficial Ownership
Common Stock	12-17-1997	S	3,000	36.1250		
	12-18-1997	S	1,000	36.1250		
	12-23-1997	S	800	36.1250	78,011	Co-Trustee RB Bracken IRR Trust
					*41,483.6741	D
					2,780	I Spouse

Table II -- Derivative Securities Acquired, Disposed of, or Beneficially Owned

1. Title of Derivative Security	2. Conversion or Exercise Price of Derivative Security	3. Transaction Date	4. Transaction Code	5. Number of Derivative Securities Acquired (A) or Disposed of (D) Amount	6. Date Exercisable and Expiration Date Date	7. Title and Amount of Underlying Securities Title and Number of Shares	8. Price of Derivative Security	9. Number of Derivative Securities Beneficially Owned at End of Month	10. Nature of Indirect Beneficial Ownership
Non-Employee Stock Option (Right to Buy)								1,800	D

Explanation of Responses:
 *Includes 3.0571 shares acquired in December 1997 under the First Merchants Corporation dividend re-investment plan.

SIGNATURE OF REPORTING PERSON
 Frank A. Bracken (Confirming Statement on File)
 DATE
 December 31, 1997