

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
 ANDERSON, STEFAN S.
 2705 WEST TWICKINGHAM DRIVE
 MUNCIE, IN 47304
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)
 Director () 10% Owner Officer (give title below) () Other
 (specify below)
 CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD AND PRESIDENT
7. Individual or Joint/Group Filing (Check Applicable Line)
 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. Amount of Securities Beneficially Owned at End of Month	6. Direct (D) or Indirect (I)	7. Nature of Indirect Beneficial Ownership
Common Stock	12-12-1997	G*	V 143			
	12-12-1997	G*	V 59			
	12-18-1997	G*	V 1080	60,442	D	
	12-18-1997	G**	V 1080	2,295	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/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. Direct (D) or Indirect (I)	11. Nature of Indirect Beneficial Ownership
Employee Stock Option (Right to Buy)								34,825	D	

Explanation of Responses:
 *Gifts by reporting person to his church (143 shares); United Way (59 shares) and children and grandchildren (1,080 shares).
 **Gift by spouse of reporting person to children and grandchildren (1,080 shares).
 SIGNATURE OF REPORTING PERSON
 Stefan S. Anderson (Confirming Signature on File)
 DATE
 December 31, 1997