

FORM 4

STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN BENEFICIAL OWNERSHIP

Filed pursuant to Section 16(a) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934,
Section 17(a) of the Public Utility Holding Company Act of 1935 or
Section 30(f) of the Investment Company Act of 1940

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

1. Name and Address of Reporting Person*

Brownell Blaine A

(Last) (First) (Middle)
2200 Berwyn Road

(Street)
Muncie IN 47304

(City) (State) (Zip)

2. Issuer Name and Ticker or Trading Symbol

First Merchants Corporation - FRME

3. IRS Identification Number of Reporting Person, if an Entity (Voluntary)

###-##-####

4. Statement for Month/Day/Year

December 17, 2002

5. If Amendment, Date of Original (Month/Year)

6. Relationship of Reporting Person to Issuer
(Check all applicable)

Director 10% Owner
 Officer (give title below) Other (specify below)

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 (Instr. 3)	2. Transaction Date (mm/dd/yy)	3. Transaction Code (Instr. 8) Code	4. Securities Acquired (A) or Disposed of (D) (Instr. 3, 4 and 5)			5. Amount of Securities Beneficially Owned at End of Month (Instr. 3 and 4)	6. Owner- ship Form: Direct (D) or Indirect (I) (Instr.4)	7. Nature of Indirect Beneficial Ownership (Instr. 4)
			Amount	or (D)	Price			
Common	12/17/02	M	200	A	21.7524	0		
Common	12/17/02	G	V	200	D	0		
Common	12/17/02	G	V	200	A	410	I	Spouse

* If the Form is filed by more than one Reporting Person, see Instruction 4(b)(v).

Reminder: Report on a separate line for each class of securities beneficially owned directly or indirectly.

FORM 4 (continued)

Table II -- Derivative Securities Acquired, Disposed of, or Beneficially Owned (e.g., puts, calls, warrants, options, convertible securities)

1. Title of Derivative Security (Instr. 3)	2. Conversion or Exercise Price of Derivative Security	3. Transaction Date (Month/Day/Year)	4. Transaction Code (Instr. 8) Code V	5. Number of Derivative Securities Acquired (A) or Disposed of (D) (Instr. 3, 4 and 5) (A) (D)	6. Date Exercisable and Expiration Date (Month/Day/Year) Expirable Date	7. Title and Amount of Underlying Securities (Instr. 3 and 4) Amount or Number of Shares	8. Price of Derivative Security (Instr. 5)	9. Number of Derivative Securities Beneficially Owned at End of Month (Instr. 4)	10. Ownership Form of Derivative Security: Direct (D) or Indirect (I) (Instr. 4)	11. Nature of Ownership: Direct Beneficial Ownership (Instr. 4)
Non-Employee Director Stock Option (Right to Buy)	21.7524	12/17/02	M	200	01/01/02 06/30/11	Common 200		1,795	D	

/s/ Larry R. Helms

 **Signature of Reporting Person
 Blaine E. Brownell
 (Confirming Statement on File)

December 17, 2002

 Date

** Intentional misstatements or omissions of facts constitute Federal Criminal Violations.

See 18 U.S.C. 1001 and 15 U.S.C. 78ff(a).

Note: File three copies of this Form, one of which must be manually signed. If space provided is insufficient, see Instruction 6 for procedure.