

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*

Johnson Norman M

(Last) (First) (Middle)
480 Adams Avenue

(Street)
Glencoe IL 60022-1865

(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

03/24/03

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 V | 4. Securities Acquired (A) or Disposed of (D) (Instr. 3, 4 and 5) ----- Amount or Price | | 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) |
|---------------------------------------|---|--|--|---------|--|---|--|
| | | | (A) | (D) | | | |
| Common Stock | 03/24/03 | S | 2,000 | D 23.35 | 77,827 | I | Trustee Mary M. Johnson Living Trust |
| Common Stock | | V | | | 293,673 | D | |
| | | | | | 27,002 | 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.

(Print or Type Response)

(Over)

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. Conver- sion or Exer- cise Price of Deriv- ative Secur- ity | 3. Trans- action Date (Month/ Day/ Year) | 4. Trans- action 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) ----- Date Expira- tion Date | 7. Title and Amount of Underlying Securities (Instr. 3 and 4) ----- Amount or Number of Shares | 8. Price of Deriv- ative Secur- ity (Instr. 5) | 9. Number of Deriv- ative Secur- ities Bene- ficially Owned at End of Month (Instr. 4) | 10. Owner- ship Form of Deriv- ative Secur- ity: Direct (D) or In- direct (I) (Instr. 4) | 11. Nature of In- direct Bene- ficial Owner- ship (Instr. 4) |
|--|---|--|--|--|---|--|--|--|---|--|
| Non-Employee Director Stock Option (Right to Buy) | | | | | | | | 6,395 | D | |

/s/ Larry R. Helms

March 25, 2003

**Signature of Reporting Person
Norman M. Johnson
(Confirming Statement on File)

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.